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BOX

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Our thanks to

BILL GAINES

without whose kind cooperation this issue would not have been probable.

Special thanks to

RICH HAUSER

for allowing us to use "The Planetoid" which was originally promised for **Spa Fon.**

Dedicated to

GARY ARLINGTON

No. 1 EC fan in the universe.

Acknowledgements and Thanks: Ron Barlow, Larry Bigman, Johnny Craig, Ed Glasser, Tom Inge, Paul Kast, Mark Kotowski, Harvey Kurtzman, Ed Schwoabel, Bill Spicer, Bhob Stewart, John Verpoorten, Fred von Bernewitz, Jon White, Ted White, Al Williamson, and whoever we forgot.

SQUA TRONT

no. 5

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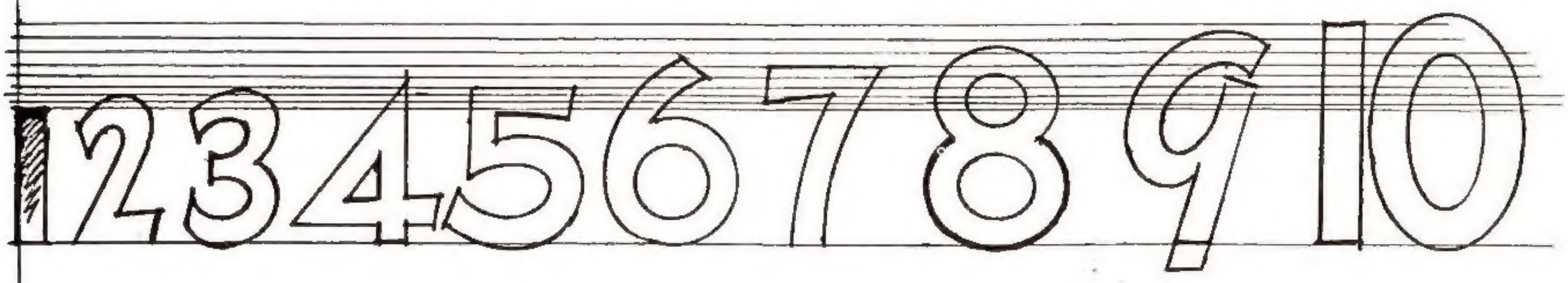
KURTZMAN ON SESAME STREET



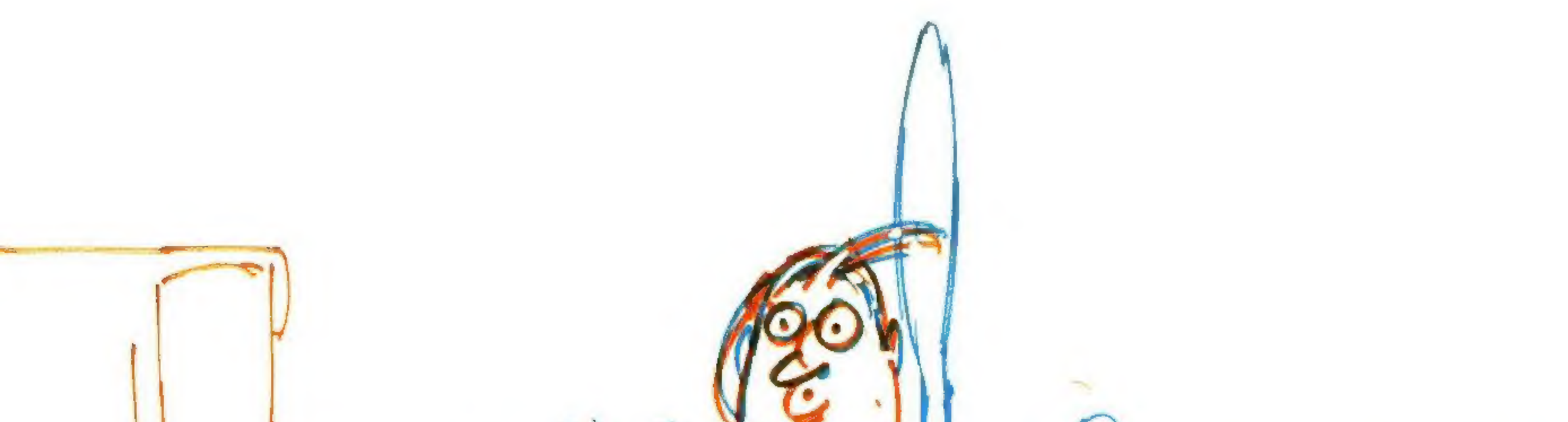
Phil Kimmelman & Associates, Inc. is a firm that specializes in advertising animation, often based on storyboards and designs by famous cartoonists. They've done commercials utilizing the work of Tomi Ungerer, Lou Meyers, Rowland B. Wilson, Stan Mack, Mort Drucker, Gahan Wilson and Jack Davis. They've also animated a number of commercials from original material of their own.

Being long time fans of Harvey Kurtzman, both Kimmelman and his associate Bill Peckmann had wanted to work with him to create an animated film ever since they started, but somehow the right property never seemed to come along. When Sesame Street became a market place for animated material, however, it became **obvious** that this was what their project with Kurtzman would be for.

They contacted Kurtzman in the summer of 1972 and he was enthusiastic about the idea. He worked up eight rough storyboards which they submitted to Sesame Street. Three were accepted and Kurtzman prepared complete and detailed storyboards for these which were then shown and given final approval by Sesame Street.

The three story ideas then went through the standard stages of animation. Kurtzman made a number of layout drawings for the animator to follow. The animators were very impressed by Kurtzman's feel for a new medium and his understanding of what "moments" of action to choose in his sketches to guide the animators.

Then Kurtzman made color roughs and painted the backgrounds which were to be used for two of the films. Sound tracks were recorded with Allen Swift doing the voices. Children's voices were also used for one picture, Kurtzman's young daughter Nellie among them. The films were then animated and then inked and colored on cels.

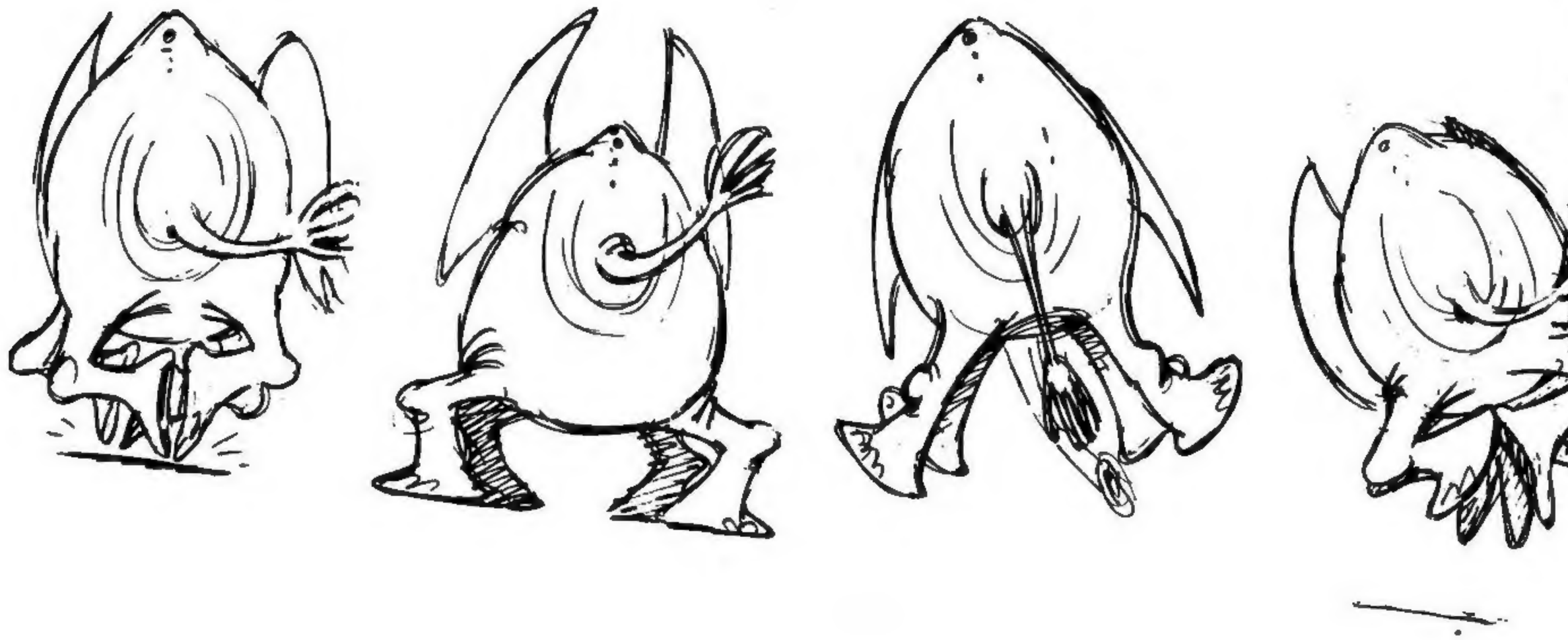


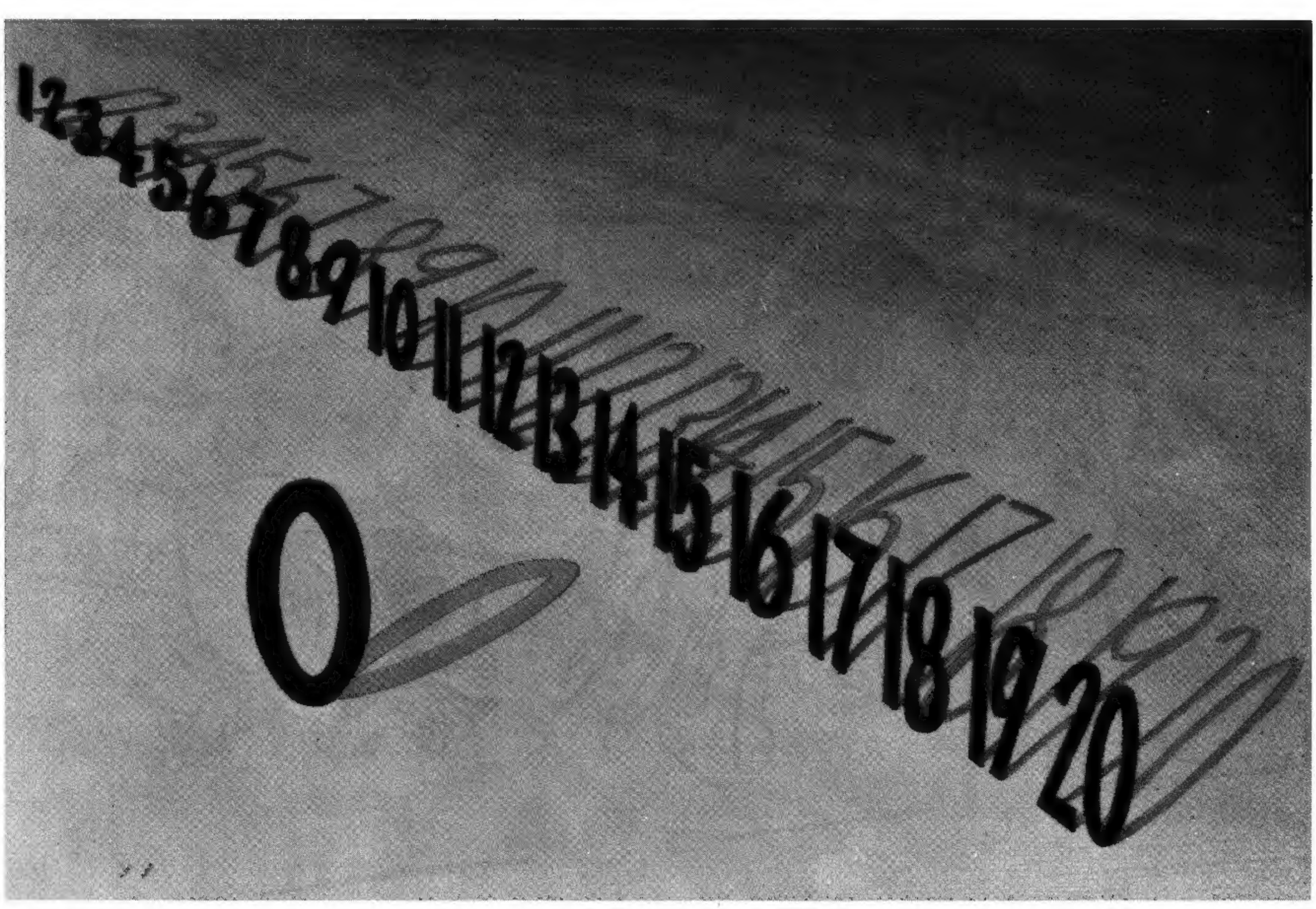
The three one minute films, which are being aired during the 1973-74 season, don't have formal titles. One, with the working title "Nellie," shows a sequence of numbers which are chanted by children. Intercut with the numbers are pictures, and the children chant, "That's not 9, that's an **elephant**," etc. This was animated by Jack Schnerk. In "Count Off," animated by Sal Faillace, a 'zero' sergeant requires numbers to stand at attention and count off. In the third and most ambitious work, titled "Boat" and animated by Dante Barbetta, an old sea dog fills his boat with numbers until it sinks.

The films were directed by Kimmelman and Kurtzman together, Kurtzman having been present at the recording sessions and generally having a creative hand at every step of the way. Both were excited by the whole project and in fact they put more money into it than they were paid by Sesame Street. Because it was a prestige and not a bread-and-butter project for the firm, it was worked on in slack periods and consequently it took a little under a year to finish the three films.

The wait was worth it, however, because they represent superb pure animated Kurtzman. —John Benson

To the right is an early version of the elephant, which was not used in the film. Trucking was abandoned for the sidelong gallop below and overleaf.

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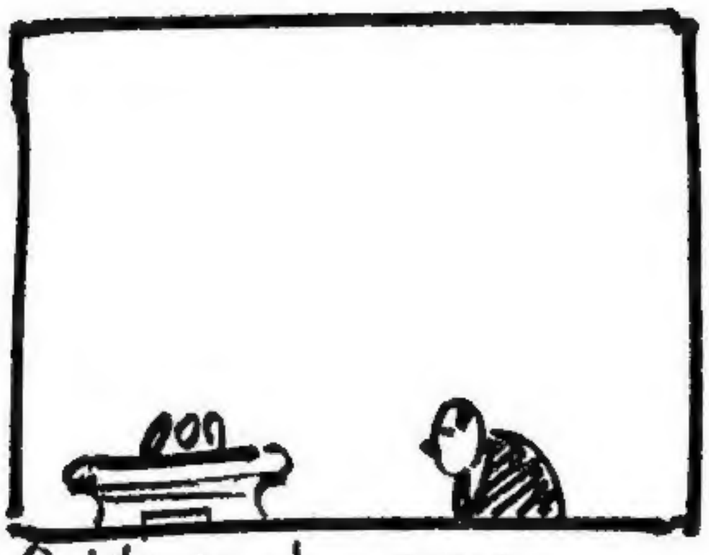
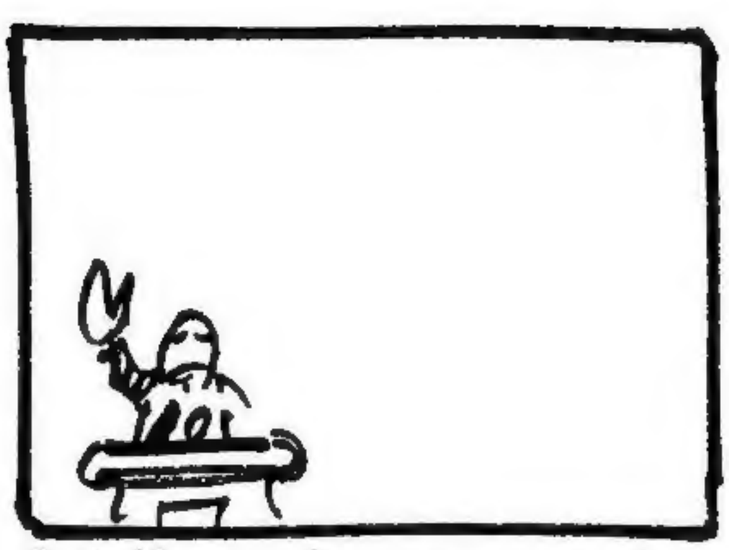
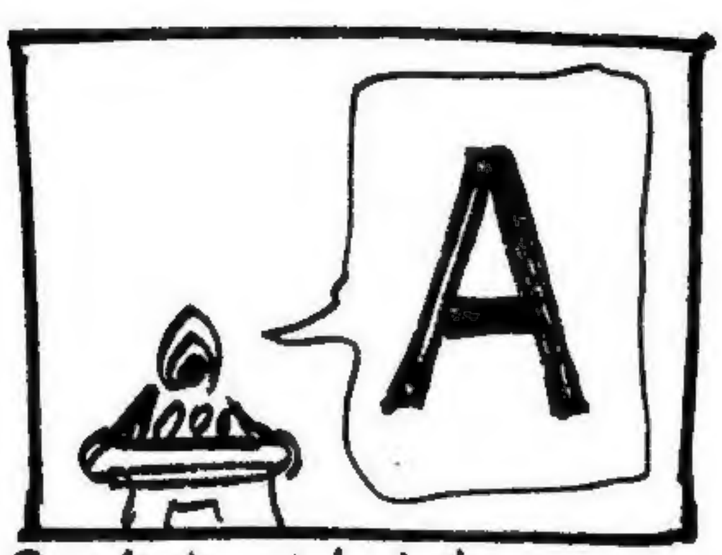


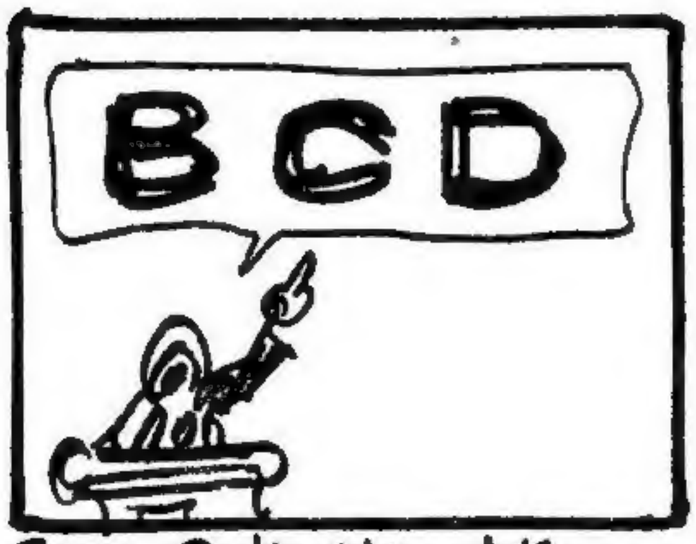
Polite applause as speaker mounts rostrum.



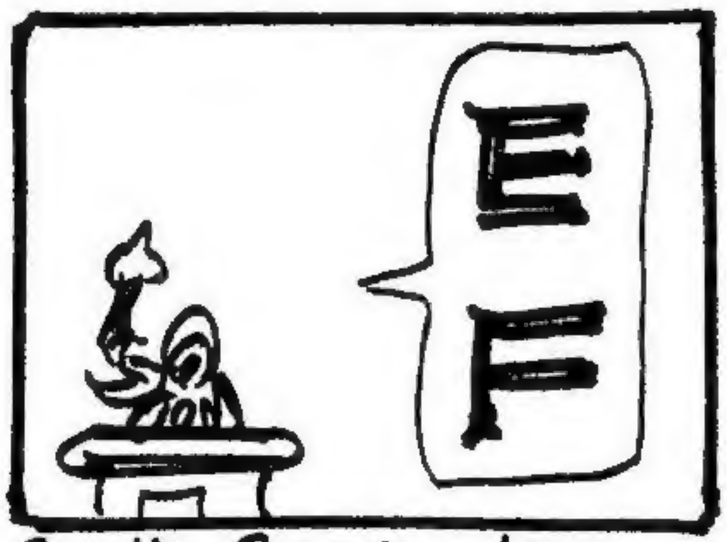
Speaker silences vast crowd—



Speaks the alphabet—synchronized to letters in balloons



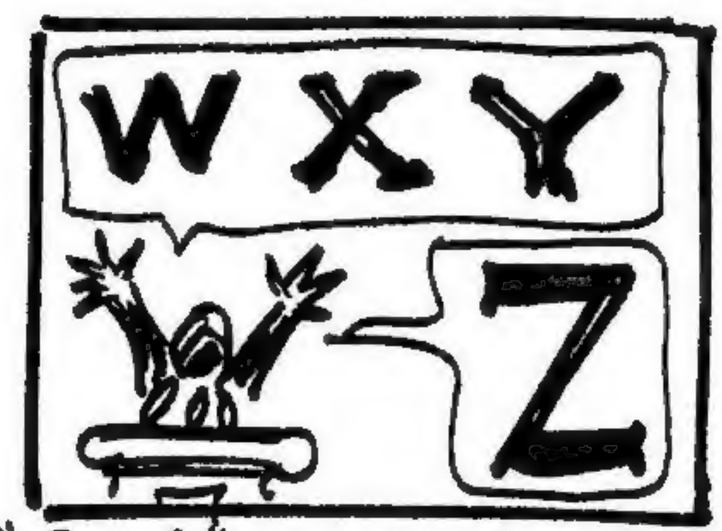
Says a-b-c's with much inflection + passion—



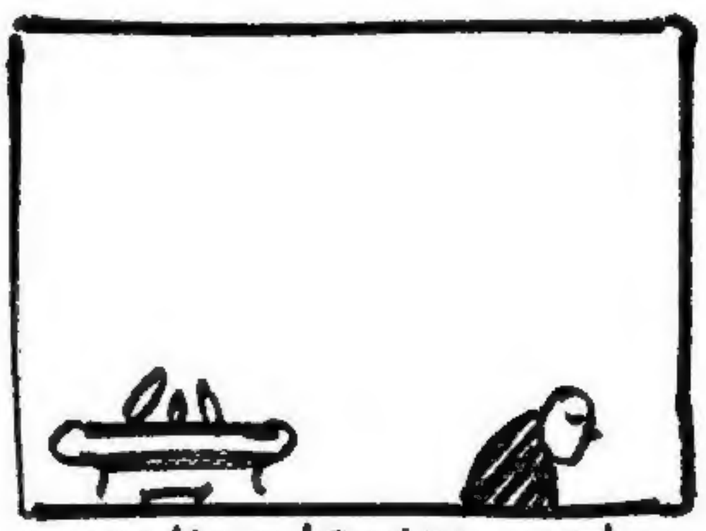
Speaks firmly—hopefully, softly, loudly—

Pauses for applause. Occasional voice from audience, i.e.: "Yeah! G!"

Doesn't say anything but the alphabet.



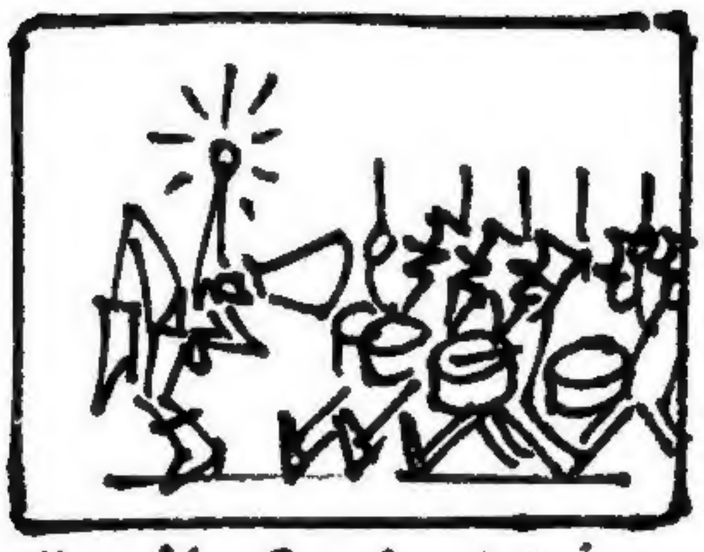
"Speech" goes to climax



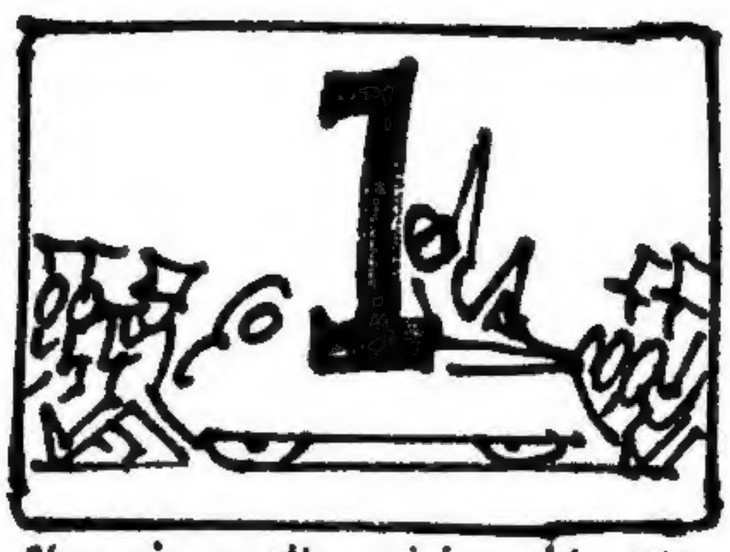
Speaker leaves rostrum to deafening applause.

The storyboards on this and the following pages were not among those chosen by Sesame Street. The "speech" was rejected because something mildly similar had been used before.

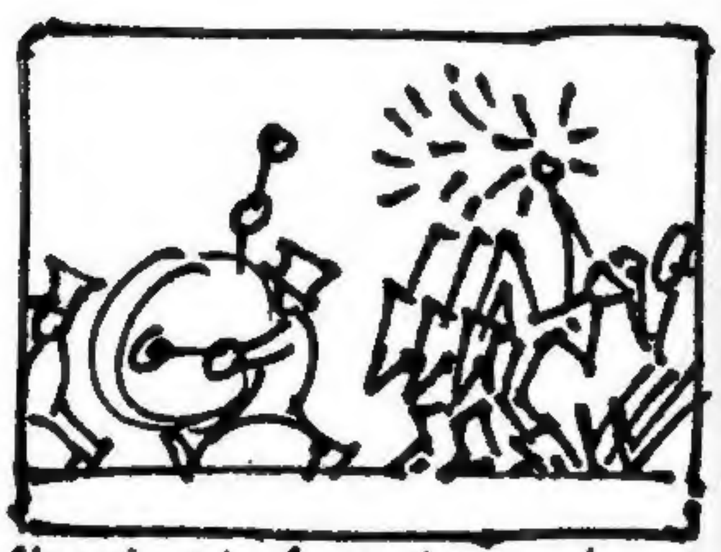
Sound of feet - like fingernails drumming on a table top.



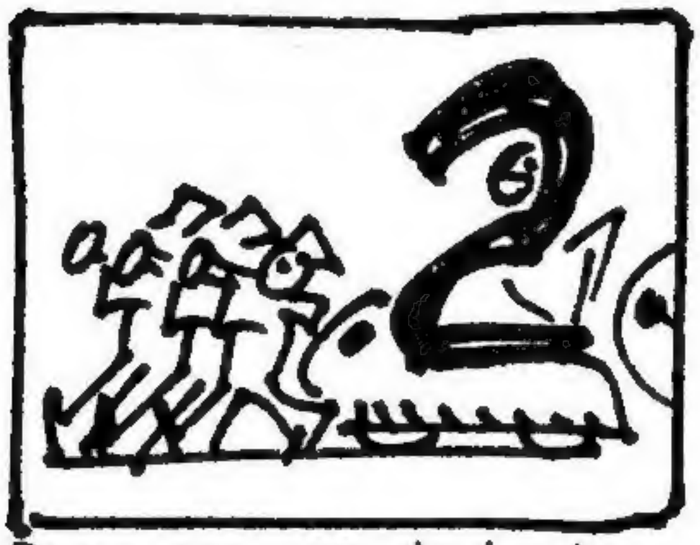
Marching Band and voices of vast cheering crowd



Cheering swells. We hear "Look"! "Here it comes"! all shout "ONE"!



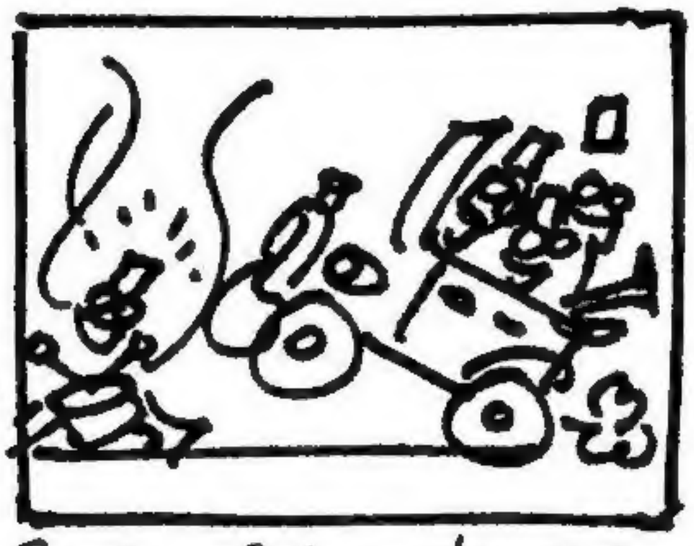
Cheering subsides - but is sustained Beat of bass drum prominent.



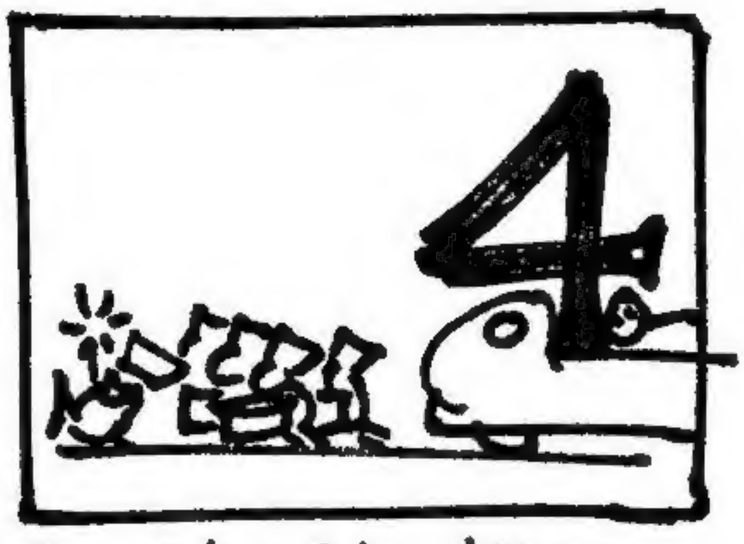
Drum gives way to bugles. Voices swell to "TWO"!

Bugles replaced by Mummers banjos.

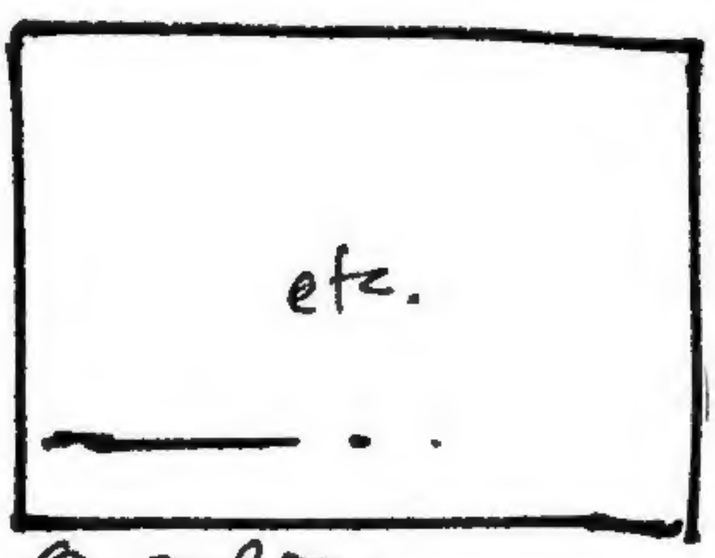
Voices swell, "Look! What's coming next!" etc. Then "THREE"!



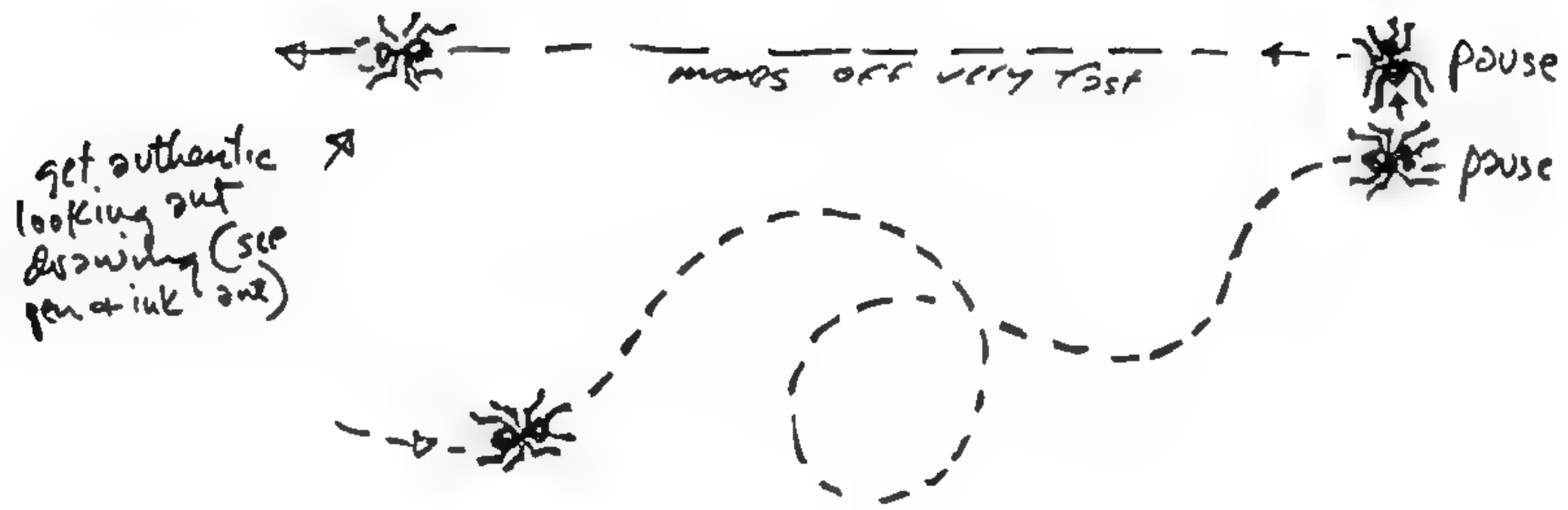
Banjoes fade, replaced by truck car, backfiring.



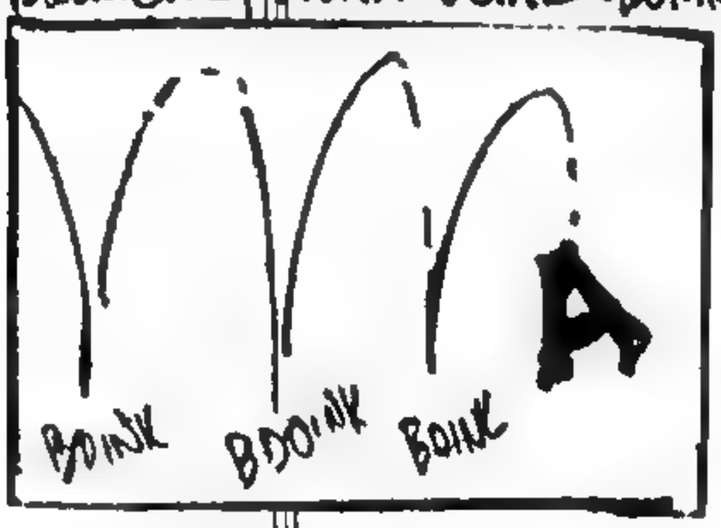
Car replaced by teeny munchkin people/voices - "FOUR"-



On and on.



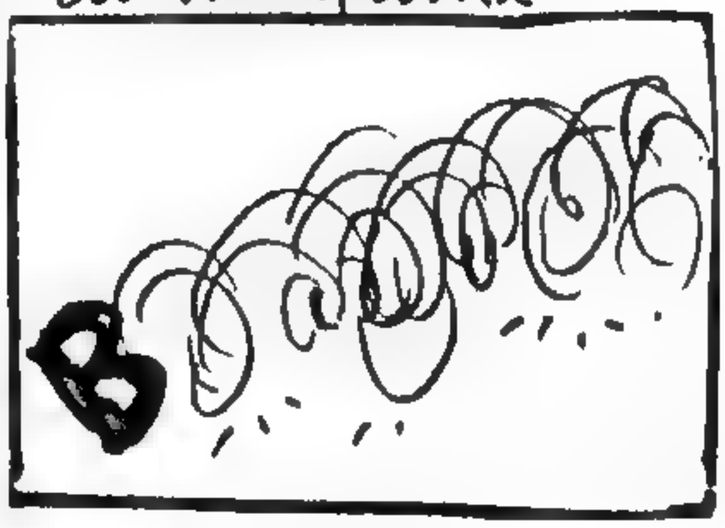
Voice: ..A..



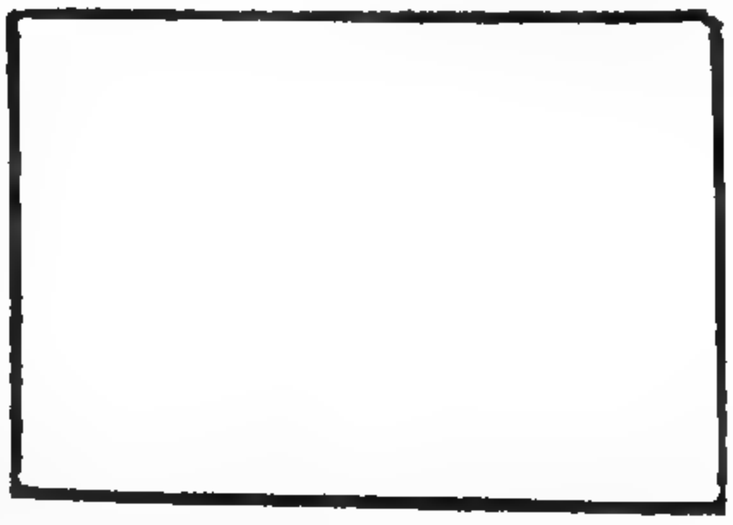
Bouncing Sound "Boink Bdoink"

..B..

Tumbling Sound

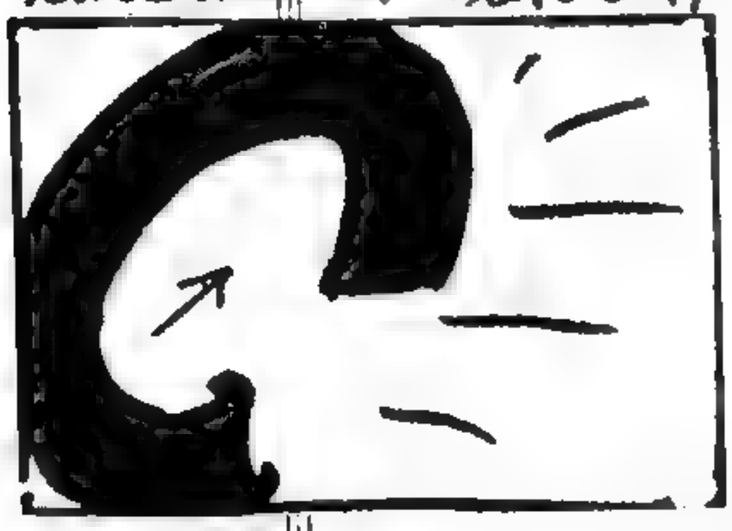


..C. (pause)

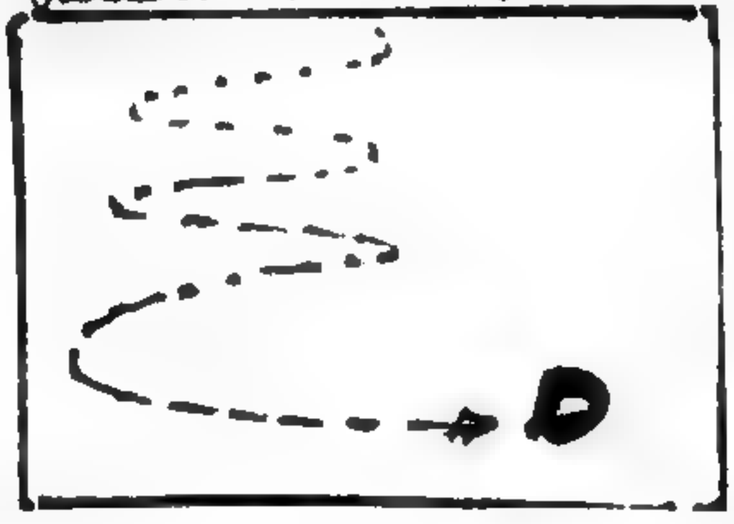


...D...

Scare Sound: "BLAUGH!"



Cute Sound: "Deet Deet Deet"



...E...F...G...H..

Sound of Galloping Horses

(Voice) ..I...

Slide whistle - CRASH!

...J...

Gurgling, Running Water

...K..

Advancing Monster Steps - etc.

Chef, between sink and soup, sits w/a piled up alphabet

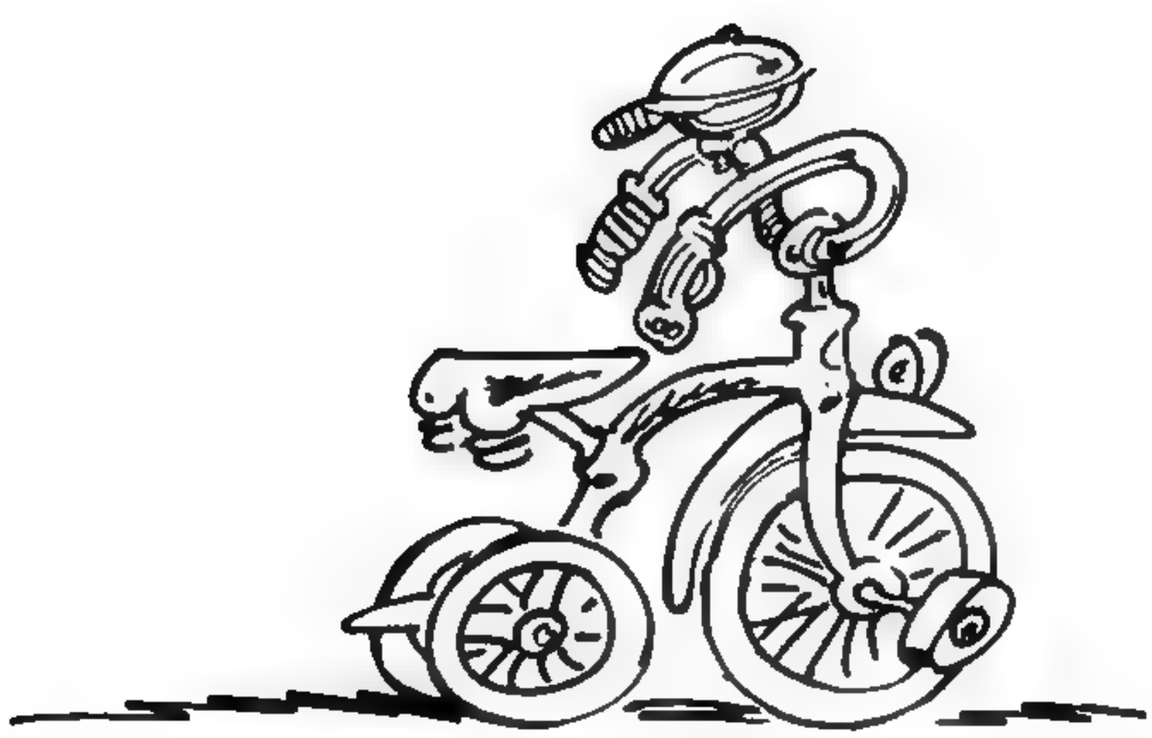
He washes the letters, one by one. "Ah, here's a delicious A"!

"There's a B"! He trims, scrapes & washes. Quite

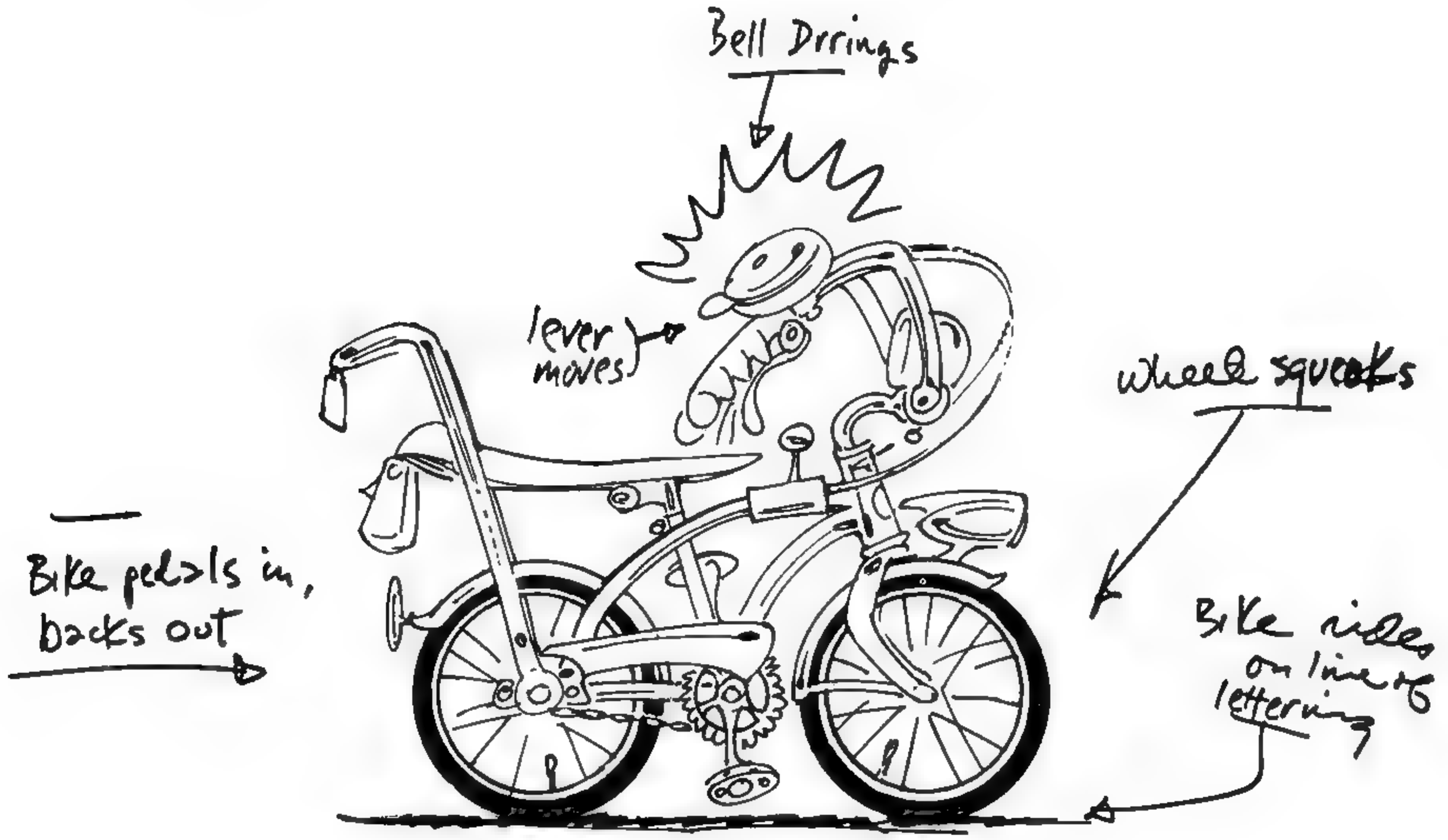
Finally, the Z goes into the mix which chef seasons - pepper/salt -

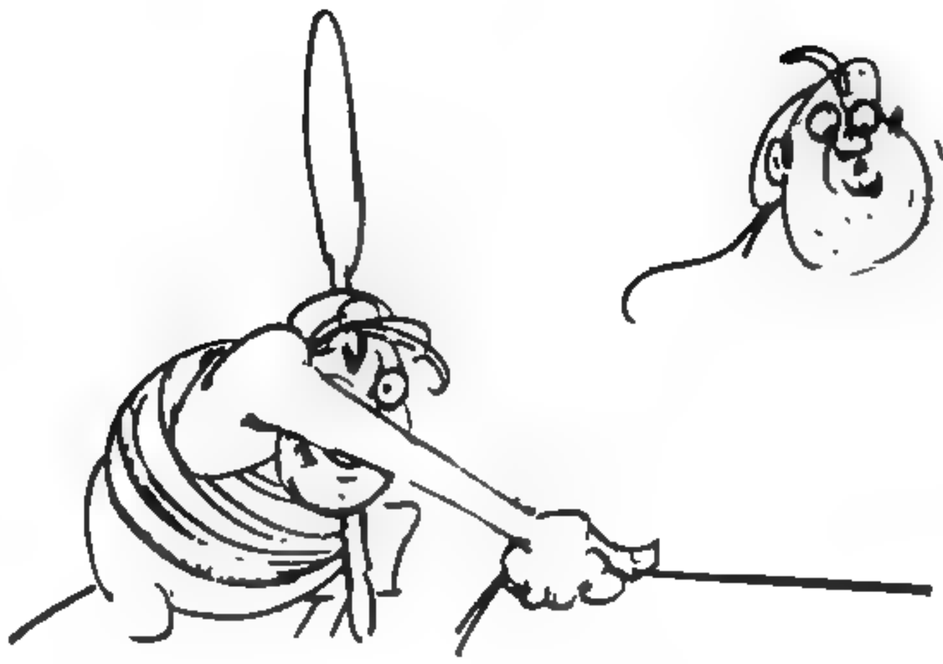
- he stirs mixture, "Ahh, I LOVE nice warm alphabet soup"

- shedding clothes - "especially to BATHE in"!



Kurtzman made detailed drawings of both two and three wheeled vehicles. He decided to use the bicycle in the finished film. Above is Nellie of the film of the same name. Flip the page for a change of expression. In the storyboard Nellie was originally Marvin, but Sesame Street, sensitive to charges of sexism, asked Kurtzman to make the change so there would be more girls in the program.





The Association of International Film Animation East (ASIFA) gives three annual awards in each of five major categories. At the 1973 awards ceremony, Phil Kimmelman & Associates came away with 13 of those 15 awards (others managed third place in two categories). Harvey Kurtzman won first place for "Script or Concept" for "Count-Off," which also garnered awards in the "Direction" and "Humor" categories. Kurtzman's "Boat" also received an award for "Humor" and for Dante Barbetta's excellent animation.

figure statue-like... doesn't move — just floats, & revolves.

the PLANETOID

'THIS IS WHAT PROBABLY HAPPENED! LET US SAY THAT A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS LEFT EARTH, BOUND FOR A DISTANT STAR. AS THEIR HUNDRED-FOOT, NEEDLE-SHAPED GLEAMING SPACE SHIP SHOT UPWARD...

NOW LEAVING GRAVITATIONAL FIELD! OKAY TO UNSTRAP!

RIGHT, COMMANDER BLAINE! I'LL SOUND THE ALL CLEAR!

AL WILLIAMSON
GEORGE EVANS

'THE SPACE TRAVELERS UNSTRAPPED THEMSELVES FROM TAKE-OFF 'COUCHES AND SLIPPED INTO MAGNETIC BOOTS..!'

MAKE SURE YOUR BOOTS ARE SECURE, MARTIN, OTHERWISE YOU'LL FLOAT LIKE A BALLOON!

LIKE SEELY THERE, EH, SIR?

UGH! I FEEL SICK!

'AS THEIR SHIP SPED THROUGH THE VELVET BLACK VOID, PROBABLY CLOSE TO THE SPEED OF LIGHT, THE SCIENTISTS MIGHT HAVE BECOME BORED...'

MARTIN, HOW ABOUT TAKING A WALK OUTSIDE? I'M TIRED OF BEING COOPED UP IN THE SHIP!

WILL IT BE OKAY COMMANDER?

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OKAY WITH ME, MEN. ONLY BE SURE YOU DON'T BECOME DISLODGED FROM THE SHIP OR YOU'LL FLOAT AWAY!

RIGHT, SIR! LET'S GO, SEELY!

I'LL GET THE SPACE SUITS!

'SEELY AND MARTIN DRESSED EXCITEDLY IN THEIR SPACE SUITS, STEPPED INTO THE AIRLOCK, AND EMERGED OUT ONTO THE HULL OF THEIR GLEAMING SPACE-CRAFT...'

MAKE SURE YOUR MAGNETIC BOOTS GRAB HOLD BEFORE YOU TAKE A STEP!

RIGHT! SAY, WHAT PART OF THE GALAXY ARE WE IN, ANYWAY, MARTIN?

I'VE BEEN EAVESDROPPING ON THE INTERCOM, SEELY. WHY DO YOU ASK?

BECAUSE, SIR THERE'S A DIM STAR UP AHEAD. I DON'T RECOG-NIZE IT!

DIM STAR? HMM! THAT'S STRANGE! IT ISN'T INDICATED ON THE ASTRO-CHARTS! HOLD ON! I'LL SWITCH ON THE RADAR-SCOPE!

SEELY! LOOK!

WELL, I'LL BE...

'THE TWO MEN OUTSIDE THE SHIP STARED IN FASCINATION AT THE PLANETOID AS THEY SPED PAST IT...'

COMMANDER! WE'RE PASSING A PLANETOID!

AND THAT DIM STAR UP AHEAD SEEMS TO BE A MINIATURE VERSION OF OUR SUN!

THEN THE PLANETOID OUT THERE IS ACTUALLY PART OF A MINIATURE SOLAR SYSTEM SIMILAR TO OURS!

C'MON BACK INSIDE, BOYS! WE'RE GOING TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK!

'SEELY AND MARTIN RE-ENTERED THE SPACE SHIP AND TOOK THEIR PLACES...'

ALL READY, SIR!

FIRE FORWARD ROCKET TUBES! SLOW SHIP!

FORWARD ROCKETS NOW FIRING!

SET RADAR CONTROL FOR AUTOMATIC APPROACH! ACTIVATE GYRO! SWING SHIP AROUND TO VERTICAL 59°, HORIZONTAL 150°

RADAR CONTROL ON AND SOUNDING!

GYRO ON! COURSE DIRECTIONS LOCKED!

'THE SHIP NEARED THE PLANETOID'...

'DISTANCE TO PLANETOID NOW... FIFTY MILES. ENTERING WEAK GRAVITATIONAL FIELD. RADAR SCOPE... ON!

'THE PLANETOID LOOMED GREEN AND CLEAR ON THE HUGE SCOPE-SCREEN...'

LOOKS GREEN, SIR! VEGETATION APPARENT! LAND AND WATER FORMATIONS!

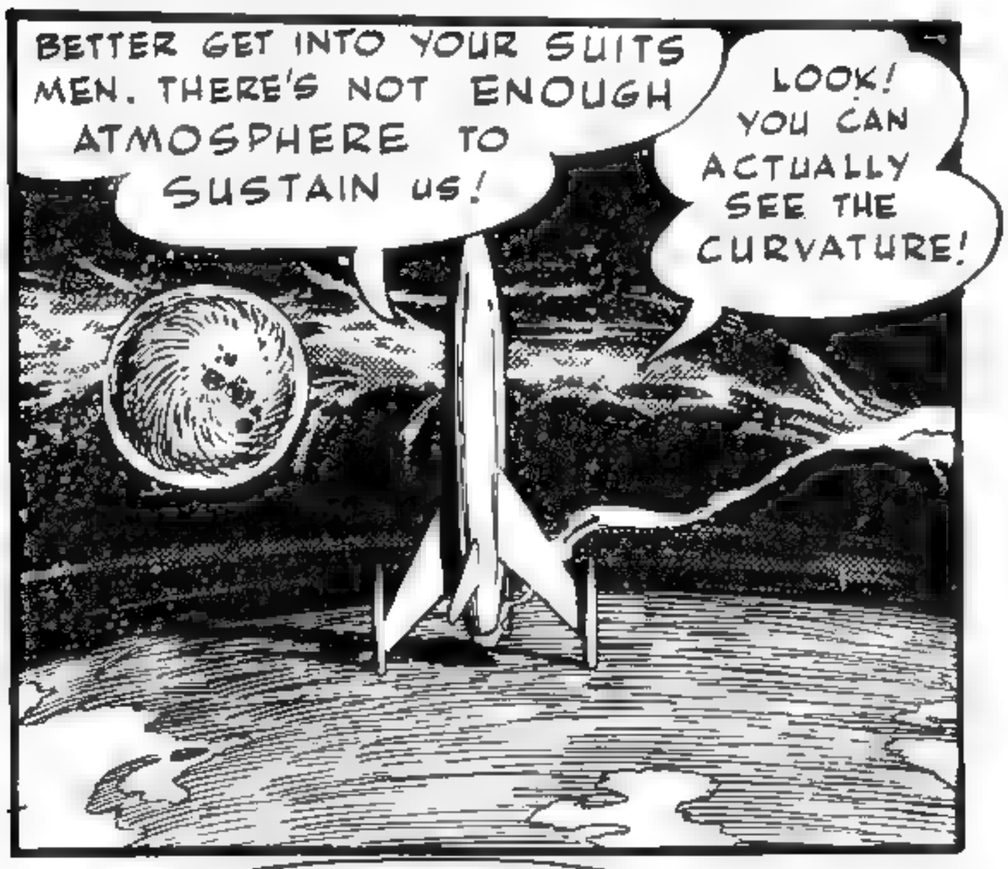
NO NEED TO STRAP IN, MEN! WE CAN SET DOWN ON HER EASILY ENOUGH! HER G-PULL IS NEGLIGIBLE!

HEAD FOR THAT LARGE, GREEN AREA, MARTIN!

SHE'S GOT A DIAMETER OF ROUGHLY TWELVE MILES, SIR!

3

'THE SHIP BLASTED TO A STOP ON THE SOFT GREEN SURFACE OF THE TINY PLANETOID...'



'THE MEN STEPPED GINGERLY FROM THEIR TOWERING SHIP...'

TAKE IT EASY NOW! WITH SUCH A WEAK GRAV, YOU'RE LIABLE TO LEAP SIX HUNDRED FEET!
IT WOULD PROBABLY TAKE US LESS THAN A DAY'S MARCH TO CIRCLE THIS PLANET!

LOOK, COMMANDER! THE VEGETATION! IT'S LIKE MOSS... GROWS ABOUT TWO INCHES HIGH!
WAIT A MINUTE! I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING MOVING... BY YOUR FOOT!

'COMMANDER BLAINE REACHED DOWN AND PICKED UP THE TINY STRUGGLING BLACK BUG IN HIS GLOVED HAND...'

'MARTIN TURNED ON HIS CHEST PICK-UP MIKE AND COMMANDER BLAINE HELD THE CAPTIVE INSECT CLOSE...'

LOOK HERE, CAPTAIN! BENEATH THIS MOSS! A NEST OF THEM!

THEY SEEM TO LIVE UNDER THESE QUEERLY-SHAPED GROWTHS! LOOK HOW THEY SCRAMBLE ABOUT... AS IF THEY SEE US!

COMMANDER! I'M PICKING UP SOME STRANGE SOUNDS ON MY CHEST MIKE! LISTEN! I'LL TUNE YOU IN!

SOUNDS LIKE SOME SORT OF SIGNALS!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I THOUGHT, SIR!

WELL, MEN! SHALL WE EXPLORE FURTHER?

OKAY WITH ME!

WATCH OUT MARTIN!

'LIEUTENANT MARTIN LIFTED HIS FOOT. IT WAS TOO LATE. ONE MISSTEP HAD COMPLETELY OBLITERATED THE INSECT NEST...'

I'M... SORRY! THAT WAS CLUMSY OF ME!

TOO BAD! I DID WANT TO TAKE A FEW SPECIMENS!

SUDDENLY...

LOOK COMMANDER! UP THERE!

LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER KIND OF INSECT! A WINGED VARIETY!

THEY SEEM TO BE ATTACKING US!

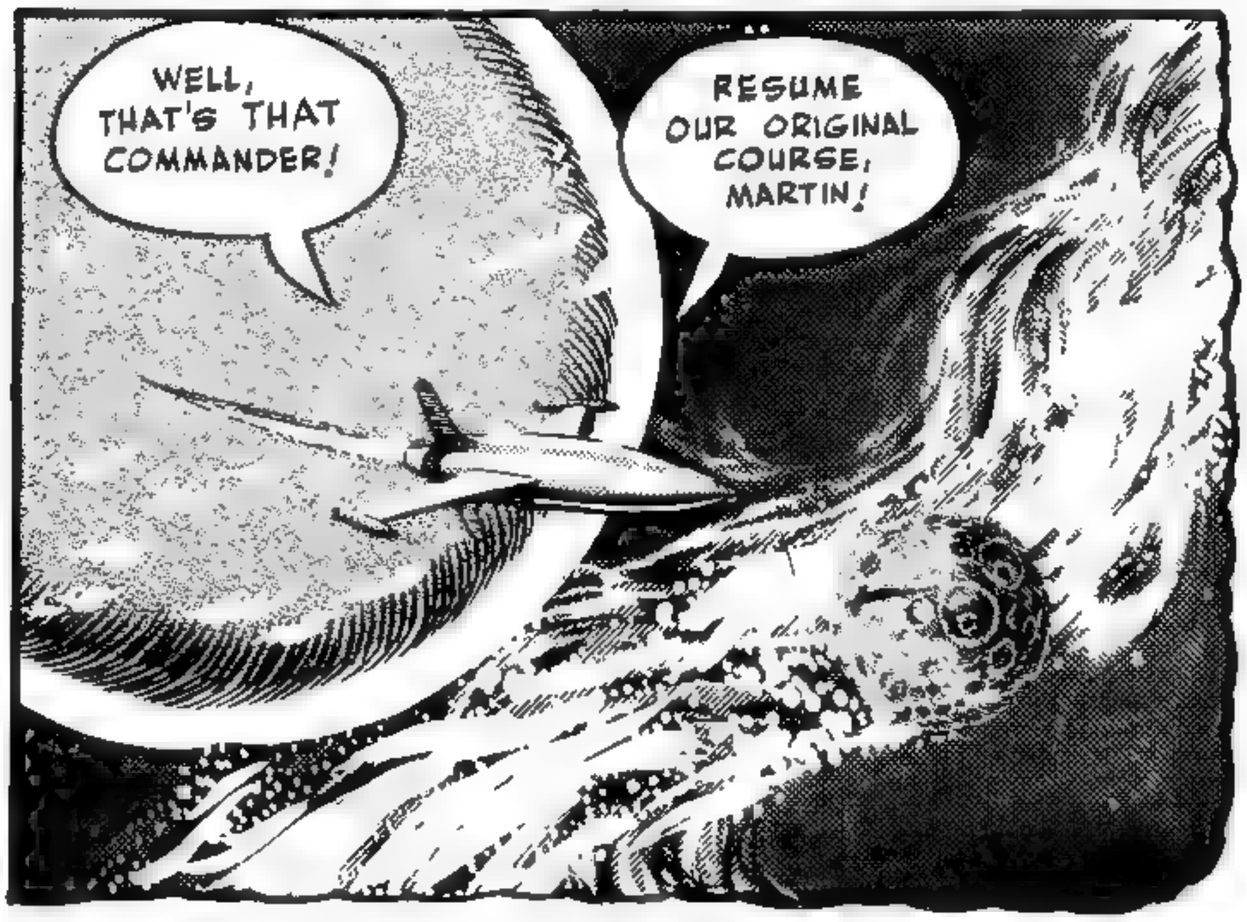
THEY WON'T BE ABLE TO PENETRATE OUR SPACE SUITS!

'THE FLYING INSECTS CIRCLED THE SPACE-EXPLORERS...'

'SEELY SWUNG OUT AT ONE OF THE WINGED PESTS AND HIT IT! IT SPUN TO THE GROUND...'

'THE SPACE TRAVELERS SCRAMBLED ACROSS THE GREEN MOSS TO THEIR WAITING SHIP...'

'THE SIGNAL WAS GIVEN AND THE NEEDLE-LIKE ROCKET SHOT SKYWARD, LEAVING THE TINY, INSECT-RIDDEN PLANET BEHIND...'



AND THAT'S WHAT PROBABLY HAPPENED! THAT'S WHAT IT SEEMED LIKE TO THEM!

ONLY, OF COURSE, THE TINY PLANETOID WAS OUR EARTH, EH, PROFESSOR? AND THE GREEN AREA THEY LANDED IN WAS HERE... IN AFRICA!

EXACTLY RIGHT, GENERAL! THESE THIRTY FIVE HUNDRED FOOT MONSTERS YOUR JET PLANES DROVE BACK INTO THEIR SHIP AND OUT OF OUR LIVES, I HOPE, WERE ACTUALLY VISITORS FROM OUTER SPACE!

AND THIS IS THE NATIVE VILLAGE THAT WAS WIPED OUT WHEN ONE OF THEM MISSTEPPED!

RIGHT... POOR DEVILS!

IT WAS LUCKY THEY LANDED WHERE THEY DID! IF THEY'D SET DOWN NEAR, SAY, NEW YORK...

LORD, WHAT A CATASTROPHE THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN!

YES! THEY MUST HAVE THOUGHT WE HUMANS WERE INSECTS...

AND OUR JET PLANES, BEES!

I WONDER WHERE THEY CAME FROM?

WHO CAN SAY? JUST PRAY FOR ONE THING!

PRAY THEY DON'T COME BACK... AND BRING FLIT GUNS!

THE END

3-D: MANY LEVELS

If you look at a 3-D comic through the special glasses provided, you'll notice that there are "layers" of art. The illusion of depth is **between** the layers only. On each particular layer, the art appears as flat as on an ordinary printed page. This, in fact, is one of the major criticisms of 3-D comics, that they have the unnatural appearance of a child's diorama which detracts rather than adds to the realism of the comic.

As a youngster I speculated that 3-D comics might indeed be created by the production of a series of cardboard cutouts (or illustrations on glass) actually set up in diorama fashion and photographed with two cameras in the way that 3-D movies are shot.

That speculation was actually not that far wrong. Here's how it's done.

The artist starts by penciling the page on an ordinary piece of art paper that has holes on the top margin which fit over the pegs of a special drawing board. When finished with the penciling, he makes notations on every figure and object that he's drawn as to which layer of depth that object will eventually appear on.

He then takes a celluloid sheet, or "cel," the same kind that animators use, and places it over his penciled page, held in place by the holes at the top of the sheet fitting into the pegged board. He inks right on the cel all of the figures and objects that are to be on that particular layer, according to the numbered notations he's made.

The artist then removes the cel, places another cel on the pegged board, and inks the figures for a different level. He repeats the process for each level except for the deepest.

Just as in animation, each cel must be turned over and the areas inside the outlines of each figure and object must be opaqued on the back. Since 3-D comics are a black and white medium, the opaquing is done with white paint instead of the animator's color. This is necessary so that any drawings on the lower levels that might be behind the upper level do not show through the clear celluloid.

The bottom level, usually the background for the scene, is drawn on art paper.

A single comic book page, then, represents a piece of art paper and three to five separate pieces of celluloid. When the "page" is taken to the photoengraver, he photographs it once, and then

(continued on page 46)

Note: The story used as an example here is "Spawn of Venus," illustrated by Wally Wood. It was intended for the same never published third 3-D EC comic that "The Planetoid" was scheduled to appear in. It was eventually published (in 2-D in **Witzend #6**), which is when the negatives were shot for this article. For a further discussion of the 3-D aspects of this story, see John Benson's letter in **Graphic Story Magazine #11**.

As proof of the fact that the artist had to draw a lot of material that was hidden by other levels, we defy you to find this charming street scene in the finished story.

Fig 1 The base drawing is inked on Craftint illustration board over a very loose pencil sketch.

Fig. 2. The first cel creates the illusion of a giant jellylike blob with these few outlines, filled in with a dense pattern of white zip-a-tone dots through which the base level could be seen. The dots don't show up here because the cel was photographed against a white background.

Fig. 3. On the next cel the background figures and additional detail is inked, zip-a-tone added exactly as it would be on paper, and the reverse opaqued. A thin white circle of paint around each head, again largely invisible here because of the white background, creatively provides a space helmet.

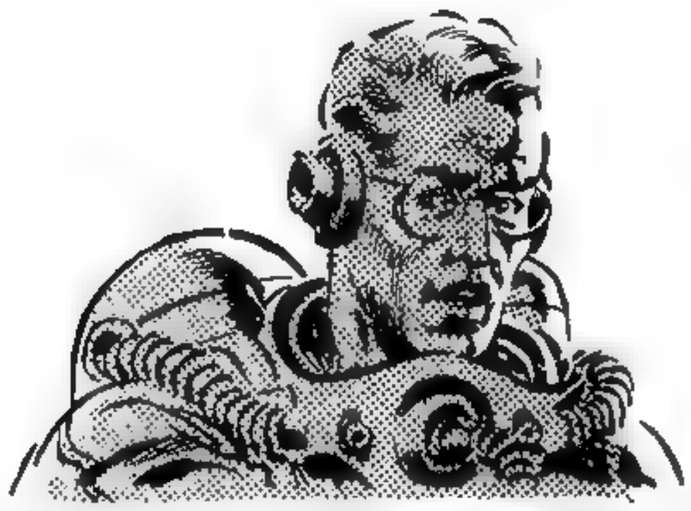


Fig. 4. On the next level, even the balloons must be completely opaqued on the reverse.

IT MOVED TOWARDS THEM AT A MODERATE SPEED... A HUGE COLLOSSUS... A SHAPELESS MASS OF PULSATING PROTOPLASM...

IT TRAVELED OVER THE GROUND, LEAVING BARE BLACK SOIL WHERE VINES AND PLANTS HAD GROWN... TURNING TOWARDS THEM... A MASS OF NAUSEATING, UGLY, ILL-SMELLING FLESH...

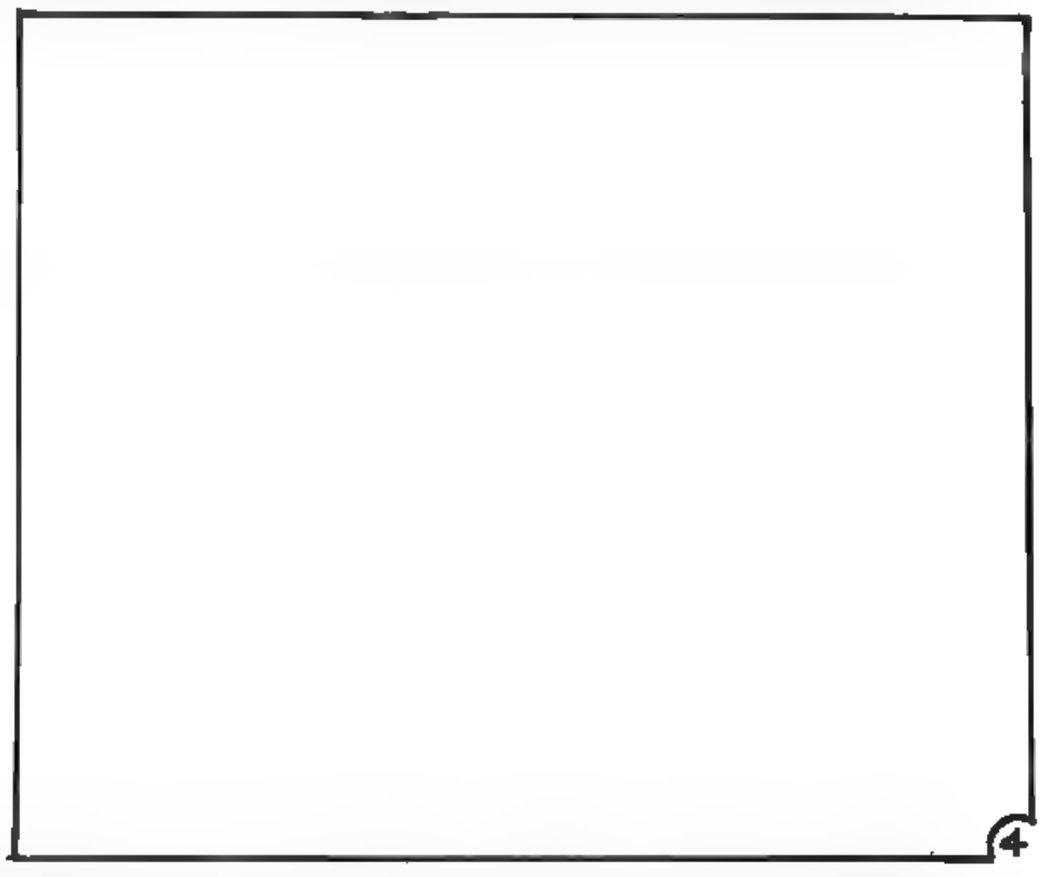


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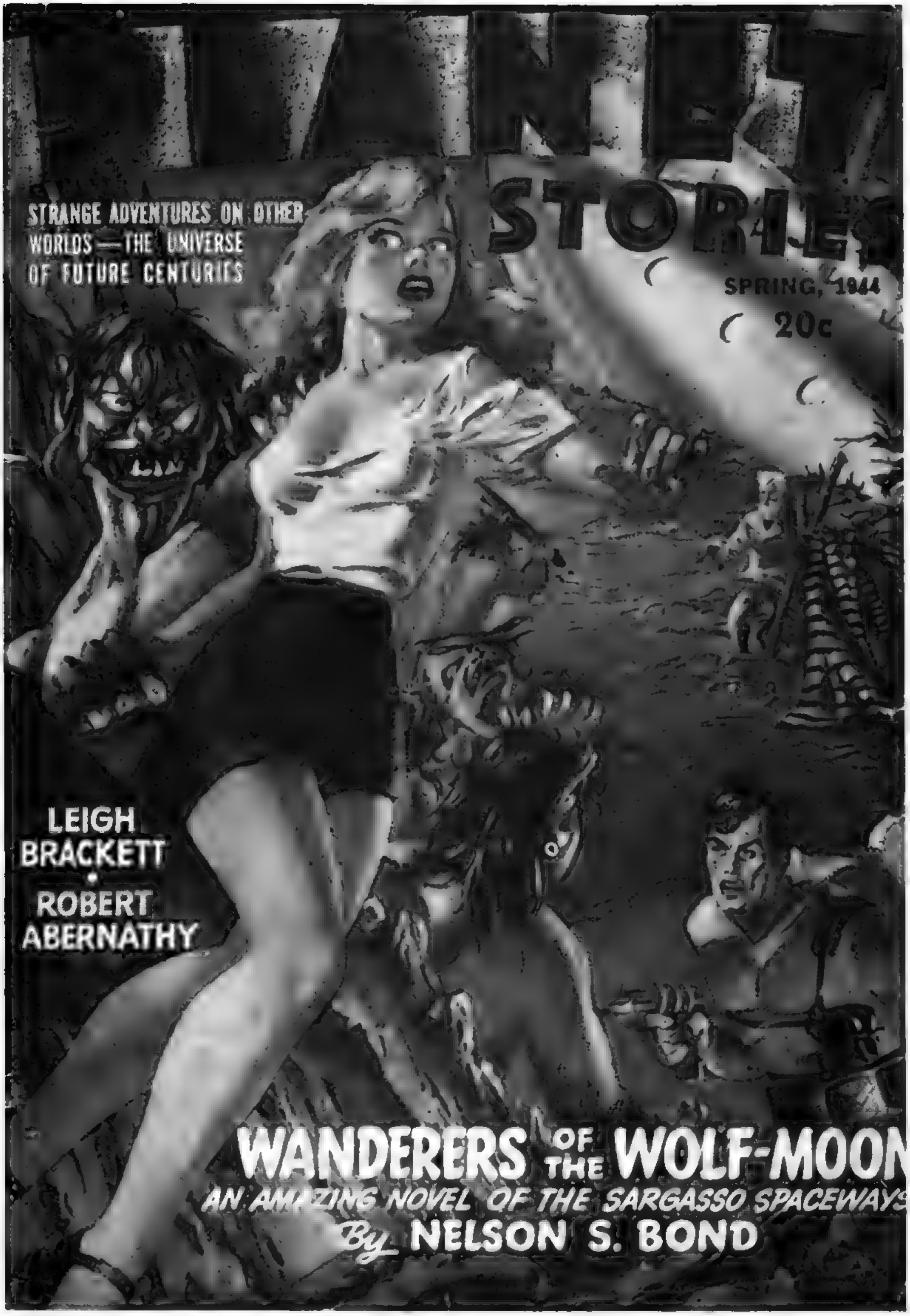
Fig. 5. The bulk of the lettering and the panel borders are inked on this cel, with everything outside the borders disappearing behind the most extensive opaquing of all.

IT MOVED TOWARDS THEM AT A MODERATE SPEED... A HUGE COLLOSSUS... A SHAPELESS MASS OF PULSATING PROTOPLASM...
QUICKLY! OUT OF ITS WAY!
OVER HERE...
NO! NO!!
IT TRAVELED OVER THE GROUND, LEAVING BARE BLACK SOIL WHERE VINES AND PLANTS HAD GROWN... TURNING TOWARDS THEM... A MASS OF NAUSEATING, UGLY, ILL-SMELLING FLESH...
IT SEEMS TO SENSE US!
IT'S FOLLOWING US!

Fig. 7. Here are the two panels as they appear in the master shot.

Fig. 6. The topmost cel affords the artist the opportunity to give that magical illusion of figures jumping right out of the 'page level' established on the cel preceding. Although this story has six levels of depth, most 3-D comics only had four.

In the biography of Graham Ingels which appeared in the first issue of **Squa Tront**, the earliest published art specifically mentioned was a job in the November 1946 **Heroic Comics**. Actually, Ingels did quite a bit of material well before that date. He was associated with Fiction House for a time, and his work appeared in several of their pulp titles. For example, he did the cover and five interior pages for **Planet Stories** Vol. II, No. 6 (Spring 1944). For historical interest, we are presenting three of these illustrations here. The same issue also had a story by Ray Bradbury, "The Monster Maker," which unfortunately was illustrated by another artist. Unless there is pulp work we are not aware of, Ingels did not illustrate Bradbury until nearly ten years later, when he drew the comic version of "There Was an Old Woman" in **Tales from the Crypt** #34. Is there anyone reading this who has a set of Fiction House pulps and would be willing to make up an Ingels checklist? **—jlb**


STRANGE ADVENTURES ON OTHER WORLDS — THE UNIVERSE OF FUTURE CENTURIES
STORIES
SPRING, 1944
20c
LEIGH BRACKETT • ROBERT ABERNATHY
WANDERERS OF THE WOLF-MOON
AN AMAZING NOVEL OF THE SARGASSO SPACEWAYS
By NELSON S. BOND

THE GHOULUNATIC PHOTOS

TEXT BY PAUL KAST
PHOTO CAPTIONS BY JOHNNY CRAIG

These informal production photos were taken by Paul Kast, using my camera. When we were ready for the final photos, Paul switched to his Speed Graphic. Here Al is starting to build up the Vault Keeper's nose, as I hold a mag for him to work from.

People often speculate about what it would have been like to be at the scene of a great event—was it really exciting? Were the bystanders aware of the momentous goings-on? Can you imagine being present during the Gettysburg Address, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, the sinking of the Titanic! Well, I was not at any of these great events, but **I was there** when John Craig made himself up to look like the GhouLunatics–you know, the Crypt Keeper, the Vault Keeper and the Old Witch.

In 1950 through 1952 I was a struggling student at the Law School of New York University. I had the good fortune of having the famous William M. Gaines, publisher of **Mad** magazine, as a family friend. In 1950 (when Gaines was not so famous), he was busy struggling as mastermind of Entertaining Comics, with the infamous titles, **Tales from the Crypt, The Vault of Horror, Modern Love** and other delicacies. Perceiving me as a fellow struggler, he gave me a job as his 'assistant.' I was involved in story conferences, errands, squirt gun fights, chauffeuring and miscellaneous hell-raising.

During this period, I met and kibitzed with the now legendary writer-artists Al Feldstein and John Craig. I can remember the day Feldstein was preparing a **Weird Science** story involving a conversation between two Martians. Without hesitation, he pencilled in some weighty dialogue: "Squa Tront!" This verbiage is now immortal. In my opinion, it really meant nothing then and it means nothing now. It is **not** French, German, Yiddish, Chinese, or anything else. Did Feldstein really know some deep (possibly sinister) meaning?

In or about 1951, when the horror titles were wildly successful, three characters emerged that the fan-public almost believed to be alive. One hot day I suggested to Bill Gaines that we start a mail order business involving photographs of these fictional beings. He agreed, **IF** I would handle the whole thing, leaving no details for him. This was and is a typical 'Gainesian' reaction—"Do what you want, but **you** do it!"

The plan was discussed over lunch. Craig would be the horrific model (Good Lord!). I was to get a wig which I subsequently **rented** in a theatrical store in midtown Manhattan. A wig was a strange and rare item back in 1951.

That evening, after we set up my 2¼ x 3¼ Speed Graphic camera and put floodlights in Gaines' green-rugged 1940 style office at 225 Lafayette Street in the "Little Italy" section of New York City, Johnny got into the spirit of the thing by gluing paper finger nails on his hands and adding pencil lines to his face. A cape, toothpaste type makeup, and the grey wig rounded out the scene which resulted in dozens of poses and costume variations. I went home that evening and developed and enlarged the pictures, which Craig then autographed with three GhouLunatic signatures.

A printer made up about 10,000 glossy type reproductions. For the next year or so, Feldstein plugged the pictures in the texts of his horror titles. The three pictures were tagged at the pre-inflation price of 10¢ each, or three for 25¢, postage included!—with the mail-order address being my home in Merrick, New York.

The dimes and quarters rolled in and we earned a couple of thousand dollars which Bill kindly let me keep to cover my tuition expenses. The photos linger on—to this day my mother still lives in Merrick and still receives inquiries about the pictures, and an occasional dime or quarter addressed to "the Old Witch" (which name she does not appreciate) still drifts in. The pictures were so successful that I threw a party for Gaines, Feldstein, Craig and their wives in 1952 at Mama Leone's restaurant in New York City. It was something like an organized crime convention, but merely involving the publication of comic books and GhouLunatic pictures!

This is the end of the story. I went my separate way after graduating from school. Every so often, however, I get together with Bill Gaines and we talk about the old days.

—Paul Kast

When I took this shot of Al Feldstein horsing around, the flashbulb exploded. No one was hurt, but an instant later his expression was entirely different.

When it became evident that the job might become messy, we moved from Bill's office into the stockroom, which had towels and running water. Here, the Crypt Keeper is taking shape.

Al adjusts an old chunk of corduroy for the VK's costume. The table is powered to look dusty.

I look angry here but I'm not. It's just the make-up.

Just about ready here. That candle is sitting in Bill Gaines' ashtray, with the glass inner receptacle removed. I can't remember what we used to black out my tooth, nor what we used for a backdrop.

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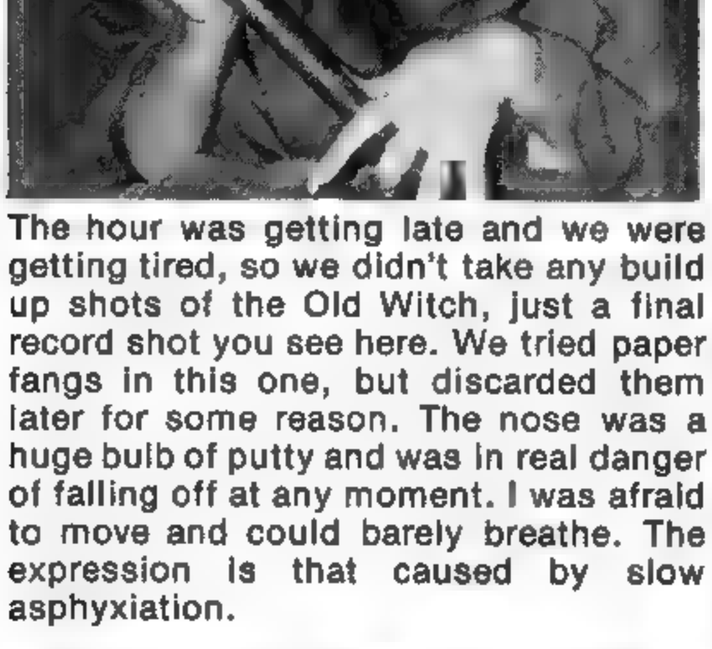
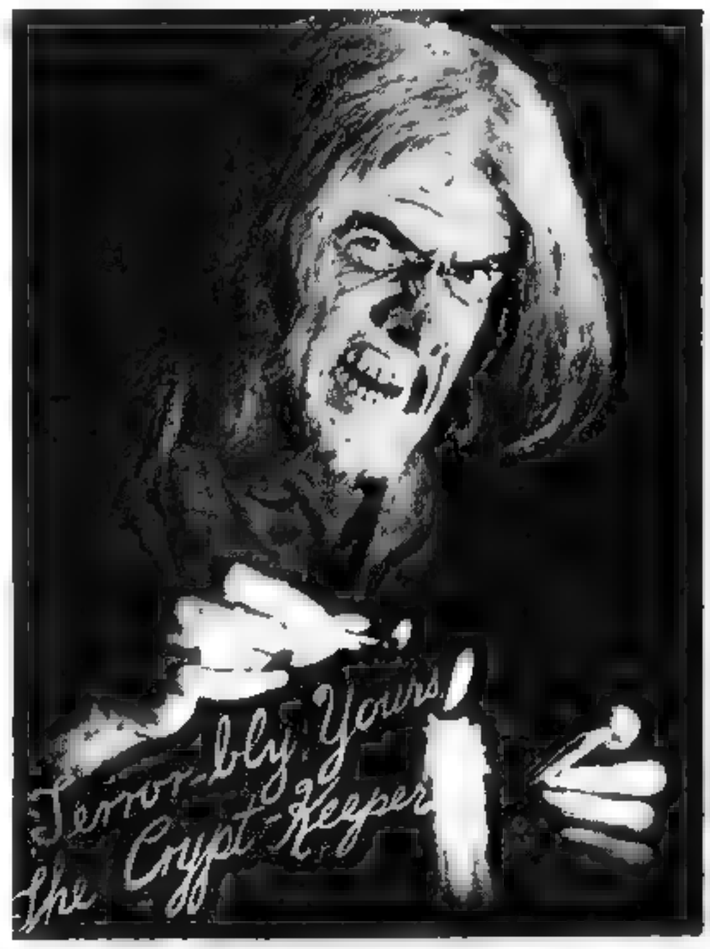
Fingernails were cut out of paper and rubber cemented into place.

The hour was getting late and we were getting tired, so we didn't take any build up shots of the Old Witch, just a final record shot you see here. We tried paper fangs in this one, but discarded them later for some reason. The nose was a huge bulb of putty and was in real danger of falling off at any moment. I was afraid to move and could barely breathe. The expression is that caused by slow asphyxiation.



"Hurry up, you idiot! My fingernails are burning!"



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JEKYLL-HYDE *of the* COMICS

In 1947, William Gaines inherited $1,000,000 and an unsuccessful group of comic magazines. He was 25 years old, and the combination of youth and money proved irresistible. He decided to try to revamp the magazines into money-making propositions.

How? His answer: horror stories!

Purveying horror to the kiddies has earned Gaines the enmity of rival publishers, PTA's, and prominent psychiatrists. But it also boosted the sales of his magazines to over a million copies per month.

When asked to defend the lurid contents of such comics titles as *Vault of Horror, Tales from the Crypt,* etc., Gaines replies:

"Our magazines are written for adults. It isn't our fault if the kids read 'em, too."

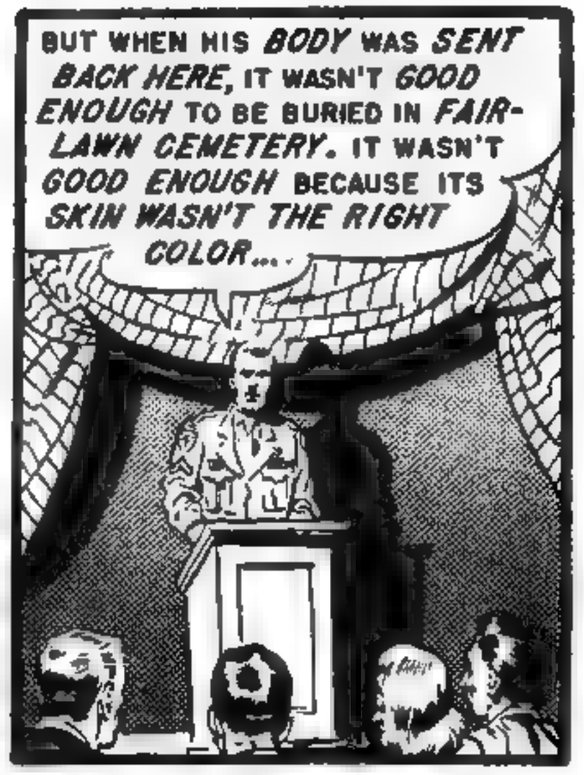
However, there is a Jekyll-Hyde personality at work in Gaines' magazines.

For along with frankly sensational, often revolting "horror stories," Gaines also publishes comics stories which make a bold and welcome plea for racial tolerance. (*See illustration opposite*).

These stories which appear in his regular horror monthlies, are, by contrast, well written, well plotted, ruthless in their revelation of a kind of horror that lies close beneath the surface of life in modern America.

In this story, a Korean veteran denounces fellow-townsmen who have refused decent burial to his comrade.

HE LOOKED FROM FACE TO FACE...
I HAD A *BUDDY* IN KOREA. WE *ATE TOGETHER...SLEPT TOGETHER... LAUGHED TOGETHER..CRIED TOGETHER.* WE *FOUGHT TOGETHER.* WE FOUGHT FOR *DEMOCRACY* TOGETHER...


BUT WHEN HIS *BODY* WAS *SENT BACK HERE,* IT WASN'T *GOOD ENOUGH* TO BE BURIED IN *FAIR-LAWN CEMETERY.* IT WASN'T *GOOD ENOUGH* BECAUSE ITS *SKIN WASN'T THE RIGHT COLOR....*

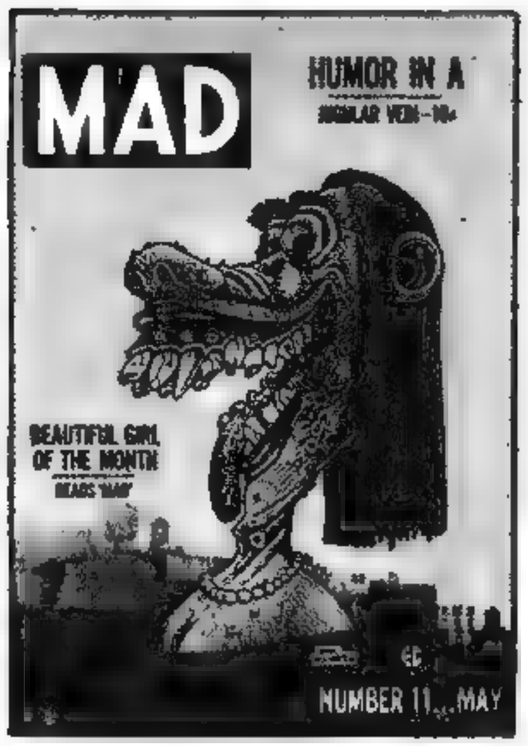
WHAT DID HE *DIE* FOR? WHAT DID *I* GIVE MY *ARM* FOR? YOU SAY *YOU'RE PROUD* OF *ME.* WELL, *I'M NOT PROUD OF YOU.* I'M *ASHAMED!* I'M ASHAMED *OF* YOU... AND *FOR* YOU!

PUBLICITY FOR EC: Several magazine articles about the EC comics appeared during their peak years, such as the one reproduced here from **Tops #1**, March 1954. **Tops** was a short lived general interest 4"x5½" digest (the first issue featured Gina Lollobrigida on the cover), and had no connection with the earlier Lev Gleason comics magazine of the same title. Its Editorial Director was William Woolfolk, a long time friend of Bill Gaines and an occasional writer for EC, which may explain how this article came to appear. Turn the page for another article from the same period.

The June 1954 issue of **Pageant** magazine featured a spread on **Mad** comics that not only reprinted four representative pages (from "Prince Violent," "Shermlock Shomes," "Flesh Garden," and "The Lone Stranger"), but also had a drawing by Bill Elder which was done especially for the piece. To fans, this was the first "official" recognition that **Mad** was as great as they believed. This article stood alone among the countless others denouncing comics as the cause of juvenile delinquency that were appearing simultaneously in all kinds of periodicals. With this article, we knew that **Mad** had it made.

Harvey Kurtzman and the rest of the **Mad** staff must have had much the same feeling, because this coverage was completely unsolicited on their part. It was a **Pageant** editor, Harold Hayes, who ferreted out the **Mad** phenomenon and approached them with the idea for the piece (and also wrote the brief text). This was the beginning of a long association between Kurtzman and Hayes. When Hayes later became editor of **Esquire**, he often used material by Kurtzman.

—**jlb**



'SCUSE US, M'AM! WE JUST WANT THE FACTS! THIS IS SATURDAY AND I'M ED SMITH!
I'M NOT SATURDAY! I'M FRIDAY! JOE FRIDAY! YOU'RE ED SATURDAY!... BY GEORGE! EVERY-WHERE WE GO... AN ORCHESTRA FOLLOWS PLAYING 'DOM DODOMM DOM'!
DOM DO DOMM DOM
WHO KNOWS WHAT EVIL LURKS IN THE HEARTS OF MEN... THE SHADOW KNOWS!
QUICK WHATSIT, THE NEEDLE!
BY GEORGE, HALF-SHOT... WE'RE RUNNING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION! ... THERE'S A GOOD LOOKING WOMAN RIGHT BEHIND US!
CE-SI-BON!
HOW ARE YA FIXED FOR BLADES?
MAD

NOW COMICS HAVE GONE MAD

■ IN THE COMIC book business, where 350 titles are published monthly and everybody follows trends, a very unusual comic book —called *Mad*—has emerged as the leader of the latest trend. *Mad* is satirical and it's funny. And in a field normally dominated by horror and violence, this is such an unusual twist that *Mad,* in only 11 issues, has soared to a circulation of 750,000 issues and inspired at least 10 imitators (*Crazy, Wild, Whack, Riot, Flip, Get Lost, Bug House, Mad House, Nuts* and *Eh!*).

Like *Li'l Abner* and *Pogo,* the comic directs its appeal largely to the adult reader rather than the lollipop set, its satires extending to institutions (right) and personalities (below) alike. Edited by 30-year-old Harvey Kurtzman, *Mad* is supplied with material by only three artists: Bill Elder, Wallace Wood and Jack Davis.

For a sample of the madness in the latest trend, keep turning.

TEDDY AND THE PIRATES... DON'T YOU DIG PRINCE VIOLENT AND THE PAGE-BOY BOB?
...BUT STARCHIE! THIS DON'T LOOK GOOD FOR YOU ...AMERICA'S TYPICAL TEEN-AGER!
WATCH ME GO FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET!
TALK ABOUT BULLETS...THAT BLASTED PRONTO HAS RUN OFF WITH MY SILVER BULLETS AGAIN!
ME KNOW WHY DEY CALL 'IM LONE STRANGER! HIM GOT B.O.!
BUT SANDY...SIMPLE PHILOSOPHY TELLS YOU THAT 'IN HOC VERITAS HABITAT LOCO AMATIS' OR BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP! WHY IS EVERYONE RUNNING AFTER THAT GIRL?
BY MY TROTH, I CANNOT GO ANYWHERE BUT THAT THAT SINGING SWORD SINGETH!
MELVIN OF THE APES - COME BACK! DON'T YOU LOVE ME ANYMORE?
DESIGNED BY CHRISTIAN DIOR
BILL ELDER
TWANG!
BEAUTY! WHO'S INTERESTED IN BEAUTY! SHE'S GOT A COPY OF MAD COMICS!

THE EC FAN BULLETIN

THE E.C. FANZINES
PART ONE: THE GELATIN YEARS

The very first fan publication about comics was Ted White's **The Story of Superman.** This little 4"x6" mimeographed pamphlet was also the very first publication of any kind by the fan who later produced many top science fiction fanzines, including **Zip, Void** and **Stellar**, and is now a novelist and the editor of the fannishly oriented prozines **Amazing** and **Fantastic.**

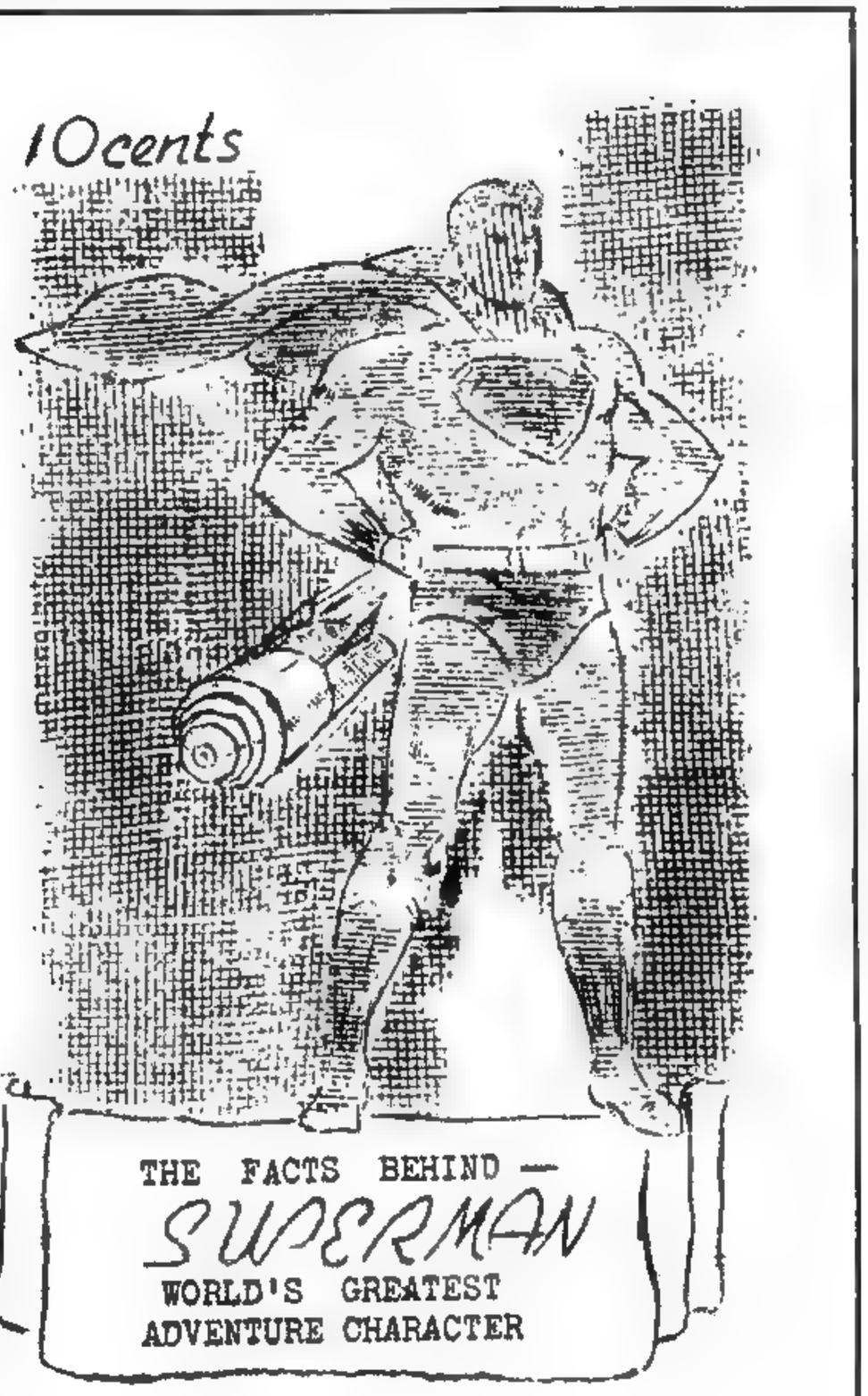
The Story of Superman was small sized because it was printed on a postcard mimeograph, which was all Ted owned in the way of printing equipment for several years. (A postcard mimeograph is a very small machine intended for printing club meeting notices and such on postcards.) It went through four printings, the final one being retitled **The Facts Behind Superman**, and each was better printed and gave a more complete history than the one before. (A "fifth and last edition" was advertised in the fifth issue of Ted's fanzine **Zip**, but this is probably due to a different method of counting "editions.")

In fact, the early editions did not receive much circulation beyond a few of Ted's friends, and were primarily experiments in stenciling artwork, with written material added as a connective thread. A few copies of the first three editions were stapled together and sold as a set for ten cents. Even the final edition had a very small sale, and one can speculate that fewer than 50 copies were ever distributed.

The first edition came out in the summer of 1952 and the last edition was probably in late 1953 or early 1954. An ad for the third edition is in **The EC Fan Bulletin** #2 (October 1953) and the last edition was advertised in **Hoohah** #7 (October 1956), although this ad was editor Ron Parker's idea, and a mistake, the booklet having been out of print for some time.

The Facts Behind Superman is 22 pages, including 3½ pages of ads. The cover is four colors, which means it was run through the mimeograph four times; black for the title and Superman figure, red and then blue for the costume. For the fourth 'pass' Ted tried an interesting experiment, one that he and others repeated later; he distributed red, yellow and blue inks simultaneously in patches across the drum and used a "half-tone" stencil made with a cross-hatch shading plate. The resulting multicolored background behind the figure was quite striking.

The text, by White, Ronald Graham and Eldon Everett, traced both the life of the character and the strip. There were



THE FACTS BEHIND SUPERMAN

BY TED E. WHITE, RONALD GRAHAM, & ELDON EVERETT

C O N T E N T S

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COVER and interior art by Ted E. White

THE FACTS BEHIND SUPERMAN: Text by Eldon K. Everett, Ronald Graham and Ted E. White. Edited and published by Ted E. White at 1014 North Tuckahoe St., Falls Church, Va. 10¢

two illustrations, one showing Superman as different artists depicted him and one tracing the evolution of Superman's emblems and boots. Quite a lot of information is packed into those small pages.

Ted's introduction states, "There are omissions and errors, I have no doubt. But this is the most complete publication on Superman you will find." True, there are errors. But this publication's historical value as a "first" is matched by an equally historic successful effort to write seriously about comic books, for, prior to this time, there had been virtually no publications of **any** kind devoted to this subject.

The Facts Behind Superman was a one-shot. The first regular comics fanzine title was still not an **EC** fanzine—**Fantasy Comics** preceded Bhob Stewart's **The EC Fan Bulletin** by several months. This is self evident from the fact that the **Bulletin**'s first issue mentions "**Fantasy Comics**, the newspaper of the SF comic field, which is edited by Lane Stannard; to secure a copy send 5¢ to Fandom House, c/o James Taurasi." Taurasi is best remembered as the editor of the long running **Fantasy Times**, a regularly published paper of news in the science fiction field that was established in 1941 and continued into the late fifties. Apparently in early 1953 Taurasi decided to bring out an offshoot which would do for sf comics what **Fantasy Times** did for sf magazines. The name "Lane Stannard" was one of several pseudonyms used by Taurasi in his fan publishing.

Fantasy Comics published news items on all the science fiction comics including DC, Ziff-Davis, etc., and although the EC science fiction titles were given good coverage, being the best in the field, EC's non-s-f titles were basically ignored. Bill Spicer in his 1965 **Guidebook to Comics Fandom** describes **Fantasy Comics** as a "monthly that ran for about six months," but Ted White recalls that there were about a dozen issues.

*****

Fantasy Comics' readership was made up of science fiction fans rather than comics fans. Furthermore, **Fantasy Comics** used a newspaper format (even though 8½"x11") and a writing style heavy with the conventions common to first year journalism classes and small newspapers. It was really a news publication, and it is safe to say that although it was technically the first, it was not "the father" of comic book fanzines. The first true comic fanzine was **The EC Fan Bulletin**, published by Bhob Stewart in the early summer of 1953.

"One day it hit me like a flash that I should be doing a fanzine—not about science fiction, since there were hundreds of them—but about the thing I was most interested in, EC comics," Bhob says. At the time the idea came to him, he was already at work on a science fiction fanzine, to be titled **Fansciful**, in collaboration with Bobby Gene Warner, a fellow sf fan who lived 14 miles up the road from Bhob's home in Kirbyville, Texas who Bhob had met through the letter pages of **Imagination**. However Bhob immediately switched over to working on the **Fan Bulletin** and so, as with Ted White and **Superman**, the **Bulletin** was Bhob's first true publication of any kind.

And, like Ted, Bhob is today professionally involved with publications that relate back to his first publishing interests. The EC influence is most evident in his underground comic **Tales from the Fridge**, his co-editorship of Nostalgia Press' hardbound **EC Horror Comics** volume, and his **Wacky Packages** and other card series for Topps Chewing Gum. As editor, art director, writer or artist (or in combination), Bhob has also contributed to **Castle of Frankenstein, TV Guide, Flashback, Cavalier, The Realist,** and Charlton, Warren and Marvel comics and other publications.

About five years before **The EC Fan Bulletin**, when Bhob was still in grammar school in Lexington and Greenwood, Mississippi (the Stewarts made several moves in the South and Southwest during his childhood), he produced a weekly hand-written publication called **The Nutty Newspaper** for two years. Like Charles and Robert Crumb's childhood comics, each issue of the **Newspaper** had only one copy, the original, which was passed from hand to hand among Bhob's schoolmates. A regular feature was a strip titled "L'il Stupe," somewhat influenced by Harvey Kurtzman's "Hey Look" strips and the work of Virgil Partch (who himself had been involved with fandom a decade earlier), but based more closely on Carl Anderson's "Henry." When **The Nutty Newspaper** was appearing, EC had not yet started their New Trend titles, but even earlier Bhob had read **Land of the Lost**—because he knew the radio program.

It wasn't long after that that Bhob became an avid reader of science fiction, and by the time he was in his first year in high school he was deeply immersed in fandom (in those days before other fandoms proliferated to confuse the issue, sf fandom was known only as "fandom"), corresponding with many fans and doing occasional illustrations for fanzines.

One fanzine of the period that Bhob contributed to, **Mote**, also had a column by Dick Lupoff. An issue of the pro **Fantastic Story Magazine** had letters from Bobby Gene Warner, Bhob and Calvin Beck (now publisher of **Castle of Frankenstein**) next to each other.

Another issue of the same magazine published letters from two Bob Stewart's, the other one being from California. To avoid confusion in fandom, the California fan adopted the name Boob Stewart, while Bhob picked up "the fannish h," commonly seen in words like ghod and bheer. Later Bhob wrote a story for Boob's fanzine **Boo** on the theme of "too many Bob Stewart's." Boob Stewart later became a monk.

Eventually, Bhob stopped reading science fiction and devoted all of his time to fandom. The creative aspect of fandom fascinated him, just as it has others before and since; instead of just reading, one actually does the publishing.

To publish **Fansciful** Bhob had purchased the best hectograph kit he could find through the mail for about $18, which was maybe just a little more than he could afford. With sophisticated offset lithography now in common use for fanzines, it's doubtful that today's readers even know what hectograph reproduction is. A hectograph master is made in a similar fashion to a dittograph master. The master is then placed ink-side down in a little pan or framework of special gelatin pads until the ink is absorbed completely into the gelatin. Then sheets of paper are placed by hand on the gelatin one at a time and a little bit of the ink is absorbed onto each sheet.

Like ditto, multiple colors can be used in a single "print run." This appealed to Bhob, because he was very interested in doing some 3-D illustrations, using red and blue and having readers use glasses they'd gotten from commercial comics. Bhob cannot see 3-D himself because one of his eyes is faulty, so producing a 3-D drawing was quite a challenge for him.

When **Fansciful** did come out, several months after the second issue of **The EC Fan Bulletin**, it featured two 3-D illustrations, a first for a fanzine. One was a drawing of a spaceship by Martin Jukovsky, adapted for 3-D by Bhob; the other was a "joke," a Virgil Finlayesque nude by Bhob, which, when one put on the special glasses, appeared to have a three foot long breast.

Fansciful's one issue, incidentally, was much bigger than either **Bulletin**, and featured a lengthy and amusing parody of space opera fiction by Jim Harmon, fiction and art by Bobby Gene Warner and other articles and features. Warner was not only a good fan artist, he could also sit down and type off a Bradburyish story non-stop, and his work appeared in many fanzines of the period.

But in the Spring of 1953, work on **Fansciful** seemed to be going slowly. For one thing, Warner had put the stencils in his typewriter backwards, and had to type the whole thing over. Also, they were having trouble getting together. So one advantage of Bhob's EC fanzine idea was that it would be his

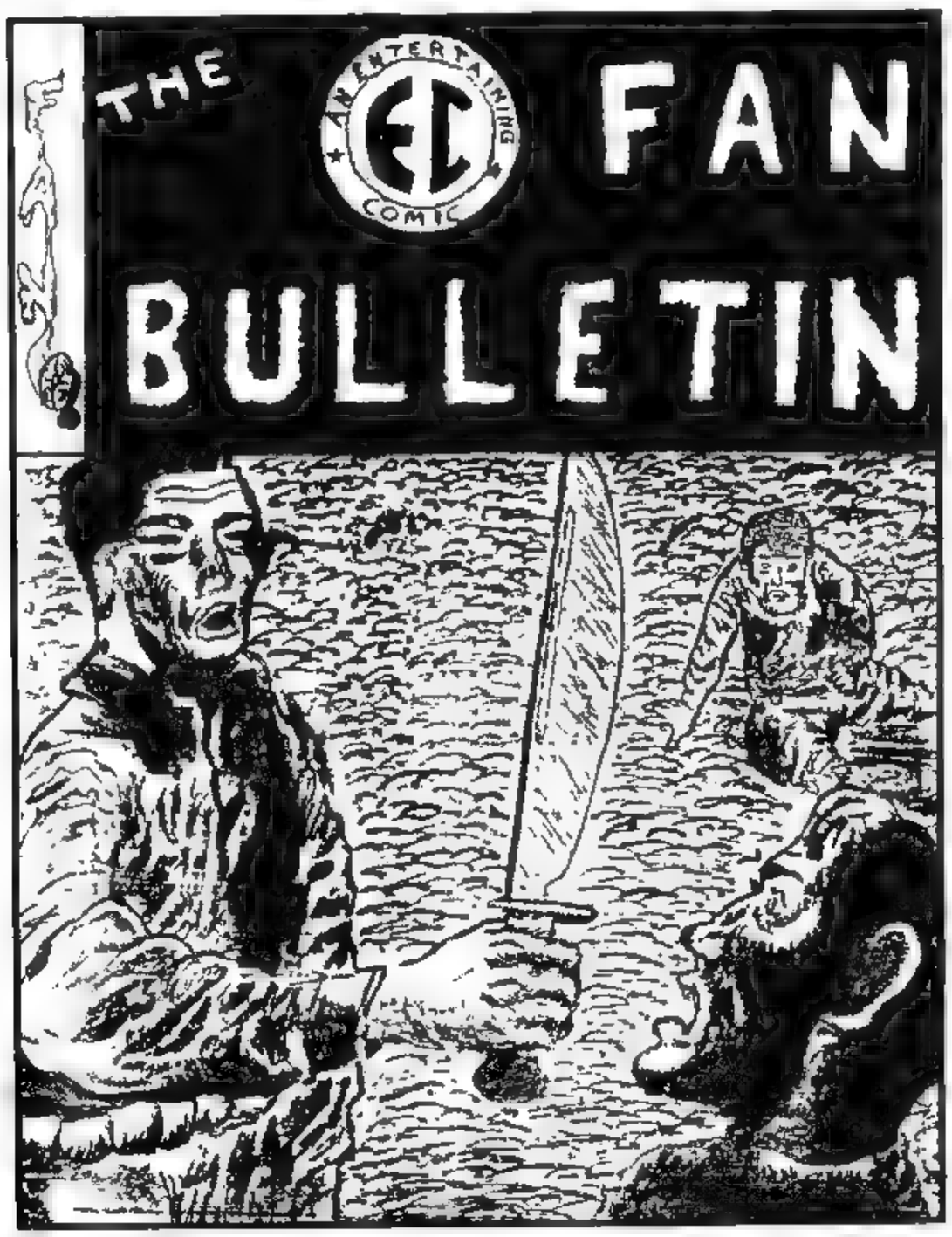
alone.

He knew from his experience in fandom that an EC fanzine wouldn't be of any interest to science fiction people, so he wrote a letter to EC, which was published in the letter page of Weird Science #20 (July-August 1953):

I am making plans to establish a small fanzine to be called "The EC Fan Bulletin." It will probably cost about 10¢ and come out bi-monthly. With your cooperation, it would carry announcements of future plans, answers to questions, news of new artists, etc. What do you think of the idea? I'd like to hear from other fans about it too.

About 80 people responded to Bhob's letter, which, it turned out, was very fortunate, because 80 is about the maximum number of legible copies that a hectograph is able to produce. Bhob was much enthused by the response, and, without a thought to posterity, he quickly got down to work and produced the first issue of **The EC Fan Bulletin.**

Bill Spicer had sent Bhob some samples of his art and Bhob took note of its similarity to Al Feldstein's work. This was hardly surprising, because Spicer was then and still is a big fan of Feldstein's art. Bhob decided to have a cover in the style of an EC comic with Spicer doing the art. He sent the assignment off to Spicer for the second issue, and then sat down himself to do a cover in the style of Jack Davis for the first issue.



Bhob had only started to draw around this time, and, in his editorial he commented, "This issue's cover is supposedly in the technique of Davis. That Korean fellow has his left arm broken at the shoulder and can't lift it (which is a crude alibi for the fact that I didn't put any action in the scene)."

The opening editorial of the nine page issue began along fairly typical lines: "Clutched in your grimy little fist is the first issue ..." However, after a brief obligatory description of the future plans of the **Bulletin**, Bhob got down to two pages of interesting news and editorial comment, typically combined in the following passage:

Article in the July PAGEANT entitled "Give the Kids their Blood and Thunder" on comic books which you might find interesting. Brings up the old comic book-fairy tale analogy ... In the same ish are a number of drawings by Basil Wolverton from his new book, COMMON TYPES OF BARFLIZE (copyright Barflize, Portland, Oregon). If I were given my choice of any artist that I would like to start working for EC, I would choose Wolverton, who, by the way, was the winner of Al Capp's Lena the Hyena contest. Years ago he was turning out comic book stories of the same type as those in MAD featuring a character called Powerhouse Pepper. Last year he was doing 'serious' work and a feature called "Jumpin' Jupiter" for WEIRD TALES OF THE FUTURE (the fellows that publish that mag have a neat system; about six months after they have pubbed a comic story they reprint it without saying that it's a reprint, or cut up parts of the story and others and assemble them into a new story—economical, until the readers wise up). Last I saw of him, he was doing a feature called "Supersonic Sam" for a cartoon-girlie mag (COMEDY, I think). EC, you've got to get Basil. I hereby elect myself president of the W.W.W. (We Want Wolverton) Club. When PANIC is under way, a new artist will be needed. If, by 2:00 AM April 14, 1954 Wolverton has not had a story in PANIC or MAD, the We Want Wolverton Storm Troopers will storm Room 706 and steal every one of Mr. Lee's cigars.

The last comment is quite interesting, and one wonders whether Bhob's suggestion was a factor in EC's using Wolverton. In fact, Wolverton's first EC appearance, in **Mad** #10, dated April 1954, came out well before his deadline. **Weird Tales of the Future** had a letter page, curiously enough, and actually published a letter from Bhob (as well as one of their reassembled stories) in the #7, May-June 1953 issue. Bhob rated the stories, EC style, and commented, "The only reason I read your crummy book is because of Wolverton."

Bhob also mentioned in his editorial that Bill Spicer had once contemplated doing an EC fanzine, but had abandoned the idea, and that John Walker of East Hadam, Connecticut was planning one (which presumably never materialized). And in the way of comment, the editorial contained a brief complaint about the house plots that EC was overusing at the time.

Most of the newsnotes in the **Bulletin** were sent to Bhob by New Yorkers Martin Jukovsky and George Snowden III, both of whom had responded to Bhob's **Weird Science** letter and offered to contribute. A few items were also lifted (with credit) from **Fantasy Comics.**

Marty Jukovsky had obtained his newsnotes by making a personal visit to EC, and asking Al Feldstein and Bill Gaines questions. They didn't seem especially prepared for visitors, so his was probably one of the earlier fan pilgrimages. It was common for science fiction fans to visit the offices of the pulp magazines at the time, and Marty and Dave MacDonald, another New York fan, had already visited several, including **Astounding** and **Startling Stories.** Marty merely carried the practice over to his comic book interests.

On that first visit to EC, Marty was accompanied by Trina, the same who is now a San Francisco underground cartoonist. Marty and Dave had met Trina through the letter pages of **Startling Stories** in 1951 or 1952. They formed an organization called "The Science Fiction Club of New York," which was written up in the Queens Neighborhood Section of the **Sunday News.** The club met regularly in Dave's basement and had several other intermittent members in addition to Dave, Trina and Marty.

Marty made several follow-up visits to the EC offices. One time he chatted with Kurtzman as Kurtzman prepared his rough sketch script for the **Mad** story "Shermlock Shomes." Another time he was shooed out because they were preparing

for the 1953 Christmas party (the films that Kurtzman took at that party were shown at the 1972 EC Convention).

Marty and Dave continued to be very active in science fiction fandom until the late fifties, being leading members, along with another EC fan, Larry Ivie, in the "Metrofan" group. Marty is now a proofreader and sometime film editor; he's also written film reviews for **The Bulletin**, a Marxist newspaper. He still maintains some contact with Bhob and other fans, and even dropped in at the New York Comic Art Convention for a few hours.

The EC Fan Bulletin news notes included an announcement that **Mad** would go monthly, and that EC would publish 3-D comics, with details of which stories would be done. Apparently at that time no other 3-D comics were on the stands, because Bhob ends with a "hope no other comic publishers beat you to it fellows."

From EC's point of view, Bhob's most startling revelation was their new title **Panic**, including the information that "a first title consideration which was completely rejected was **This Comic Book is Pathetic.**"

"He revealed the title **Panic** at a time we thought only three people knew it! Still haven't figured out how he knew!" was EC's comment in the **Fan-Addict Bulletin** #1 that Fall. Apparently it had not occurred to them that a New York fan visiting their offices might be in cahoots with a Texas fanzine publisher.

A letter from James Taurasi in **Weird Fantasy** #19 (May-June 1953) announced a forthcoming Fan Veteran Convention, and the **Fan Bulletin** gave an interesting report on the proceedings:

At the Fan-Vet Convention on April 19th, Bill Gaines spoke on WEIRD SCIENCE and WEIRD FANTASY. He told of how back in 1950 Harry Harrison (now editor of ROCKET STORIES) suggested that Bill begin publishing an adult stf mag. Bill scoffed at this idea, but later took it seriously when EC began their New Trend comics after the collapse of the comic industry in 1950. At that time the only sf comic was PLANET COMICS, a space opera mag (cowboys 'n' Injuns on rockets). After the appearance of WF and WS many space-opera comics materialized, none of which were true imitations because they did not present the same kind of stf.

Accompanying Gaines were Feldstein, Williamson, Kamen, Orlando and Wood, who answered questions from the floor—also from the audience (blame Jukovsky, that's his gag, not mine—bs). On exhibit was a story by Wood, entitled "My World," which will appear in one of the stf mags shortly. EC fans who attended the convention considered it the best effort to come from Room 706 thus far. Gaines also announced that WS will go quarterly with issue 23 and WF with 22 due to lack of sales. The war mags are losing money also.

An auction of various stf artwork was held, in which Wallace Wood purchased some art of Williamson's. Wally is a great admirer of Al's work. Fifteen copies of WS 18, autographed by Gaines, Feldstein and the artists who had work in it were auctioned off. Two-hundred copies of the same issue were donated by EC to the Fantasy Veterans Association (who held the con), to be mailed along with other stf to the stfans overseas in the US Armed Services. All profits from the con were used for mailing the mags overseas.

"The EC Offices," a 2½ page piece by George Snowden III, is an exhaustive but dull catalogue of EC's physical layout, complete with detailed floor-plan. Bhob did his best to liven it up with humorous interlineations, but it remains inferior to the countless "visit to EC" type articles that followed it in other EC fanzines.

About ten years after the **Bulletin** came out, Bhob, who by that time was living in New York, felt nostalgic and phoned George Snowden III, one of the few subscribers whose name he could remember. Snowden said, "Oh, I threw away all my EC's when I got married," and cut the conversation short, as he was just leaving the house for an appointment.

Strangely enough, the only copy of **Fan Bulletin** #1 that has been unearthed as this article was being written was the one originally sent to Snowden. (Fanzines of that time can easily be so identified because they were usually mailed without an envelope, with the address on the back cover. The copy of the **Bulletin** #2 that was used for this article, incidentally, was originally mailed to The Entertaining Comics Group.) It seems that around 1967, Jerry Weist and Rich Hauser were talking with Bill Gaines and he recalled a very wealthy fan with two complete collections: Snowden. Jerry and Rich wrote to Snowden, who gave them the bad news about his collection, but did send on all he had left; his membership kit, a very rare pair of EC cuff links, and his copy of **Bulletin**#1.

The issue also contained the forerunner of the "EC Fan of the Issue" series that later appeared in **Hoohah** (and still later in the latter day **Squa Tront**). The editor's "Autobiog" begins with the inevitable "I was born very young ..." and continues in this vein with a series of facts and gags. A few of the odder facts:

I lived in the town where Al Feldstein was married, which is Blytheville, Ark., in 1947. (Al was there in 1943.) I've also lived in the hometown of Mickey Spillaine's wife, Greenwood, Mississippi. (That's her maiden name—now it's Greenwood Spillaine.)

The elements of self parody, the puns and asides that are liberally scattered throughout **The EC Fan Bulletin** show the influence not only of Kurtzman's **Mad**, which was using very similar kinds of puns at the time, but also of Feldstein's Ghoulunatics, who were making interlineations similar to Bhob's in their letter pages, and Bob and Ray, Stan Freberg and H. Allen Smith. Several fan writers, particularly Dean A. Grennell and Shelby Vick (whose **Confusion** was the first fanzine Bhob ever saw), were also an influence.

Bhob realized that most EC fans were not science fiction fans, and so he decided to take advantage of his dual interest and run a piece on the EC Ray Bradbury adaptations. He ran an index on the first 20 of these (the other five hadn't yet appeared), including the original source of each story. His research included (with credit) William Nolan's "The Ray Bradbury Index" from **The Ray Bradbury Review**. Bhob's data and format was later used by Fred von Bernewitz in all editions of his **EC Checklist** (with credit and permission). Bhob filled out the rest of the Bradbury page with information about radio and movie versions of these stories.

Rounding out the issue are some indifferent cartoons by Nigel Kadell, a half page report on "The Frisco EC Fan Club," a one page questionnaire for readers to fill out ... and a few interlineations, like "Squa Tront?" "Spa Fon!"

The second issue of **The EC Fan Bulletin** came out approximately three months later (it was mailed on October 14, 1953), and is a much more professional item, largely because of Bill Spicer's magnificent three color cover, which is probably unsurpassed by anything else published in hectograph.

Bhob had decided that for best reproduction, Bill should do his cover directly onto the master, which meant that Bill had to purchase the masters and special ink (which, after visiting five stores, he finally found), and also had to experiment with a medium new to him without the benefit of seeing his practice work "run off." Bill worked out a series of complicated steps, first drawing the cover on a sheet of typing paper, then covering the back of that sheet with solid graphite using a soft lead pencil, then placing his paper on the master and tracing his drawing, leaving a light impression on the master, which, finally, he inked, fearlessly dipping his best Winsor Newton brush into the foul smelling hecto inks.

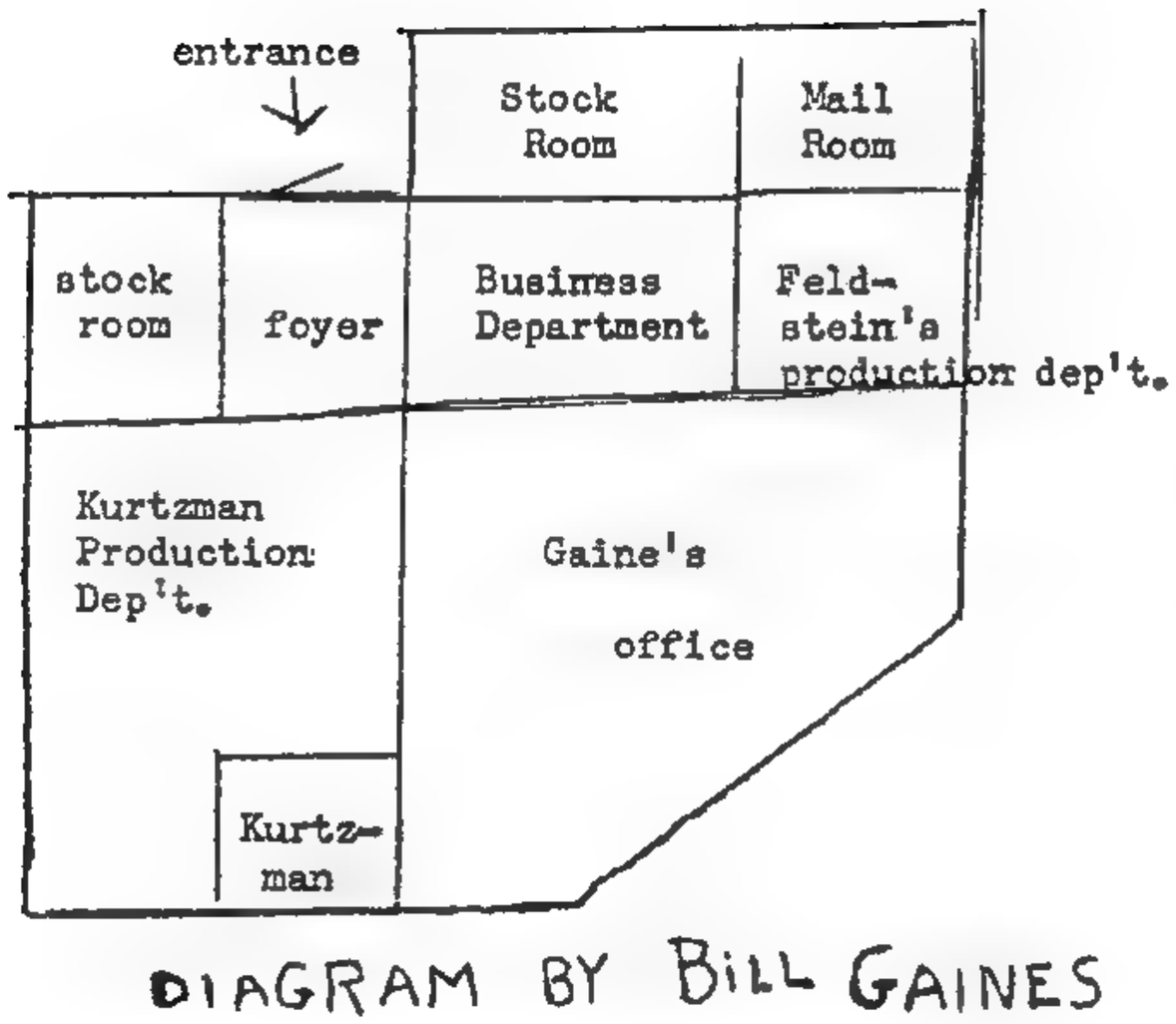
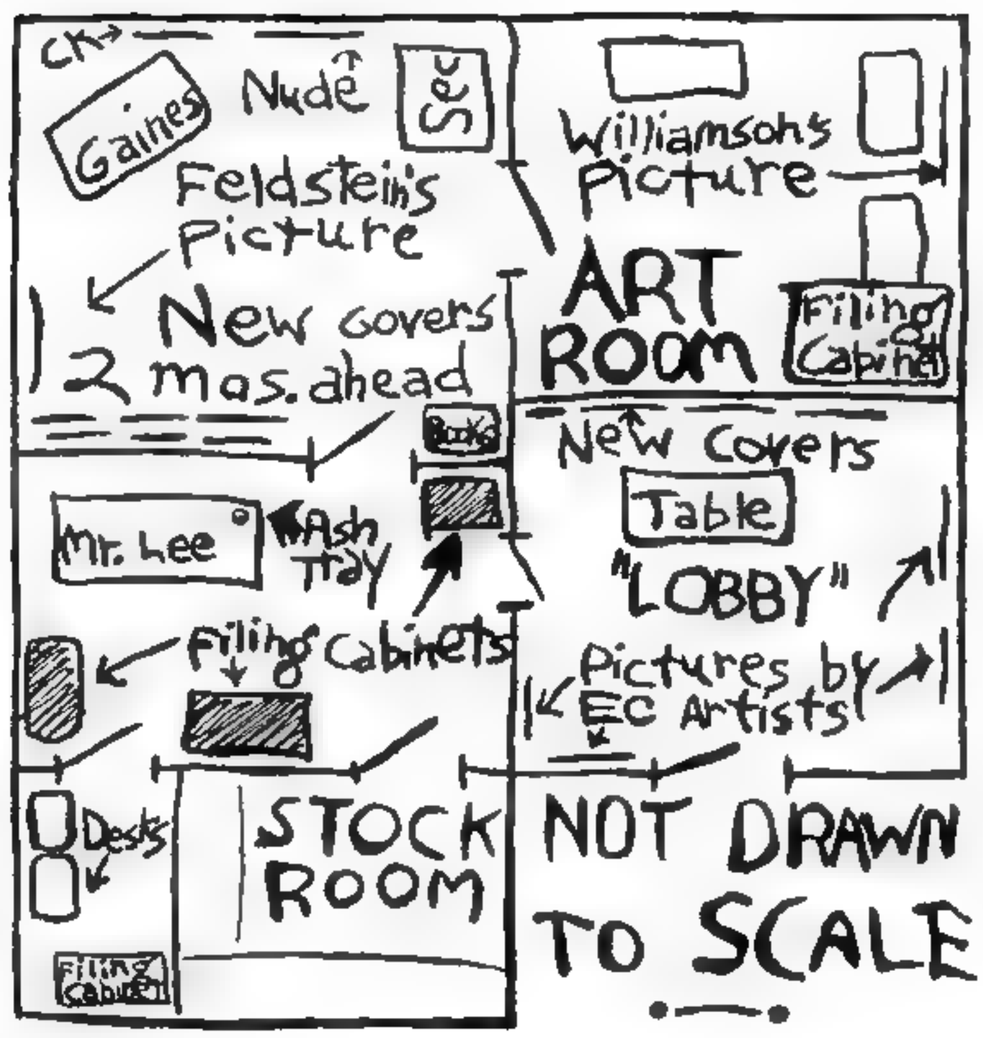
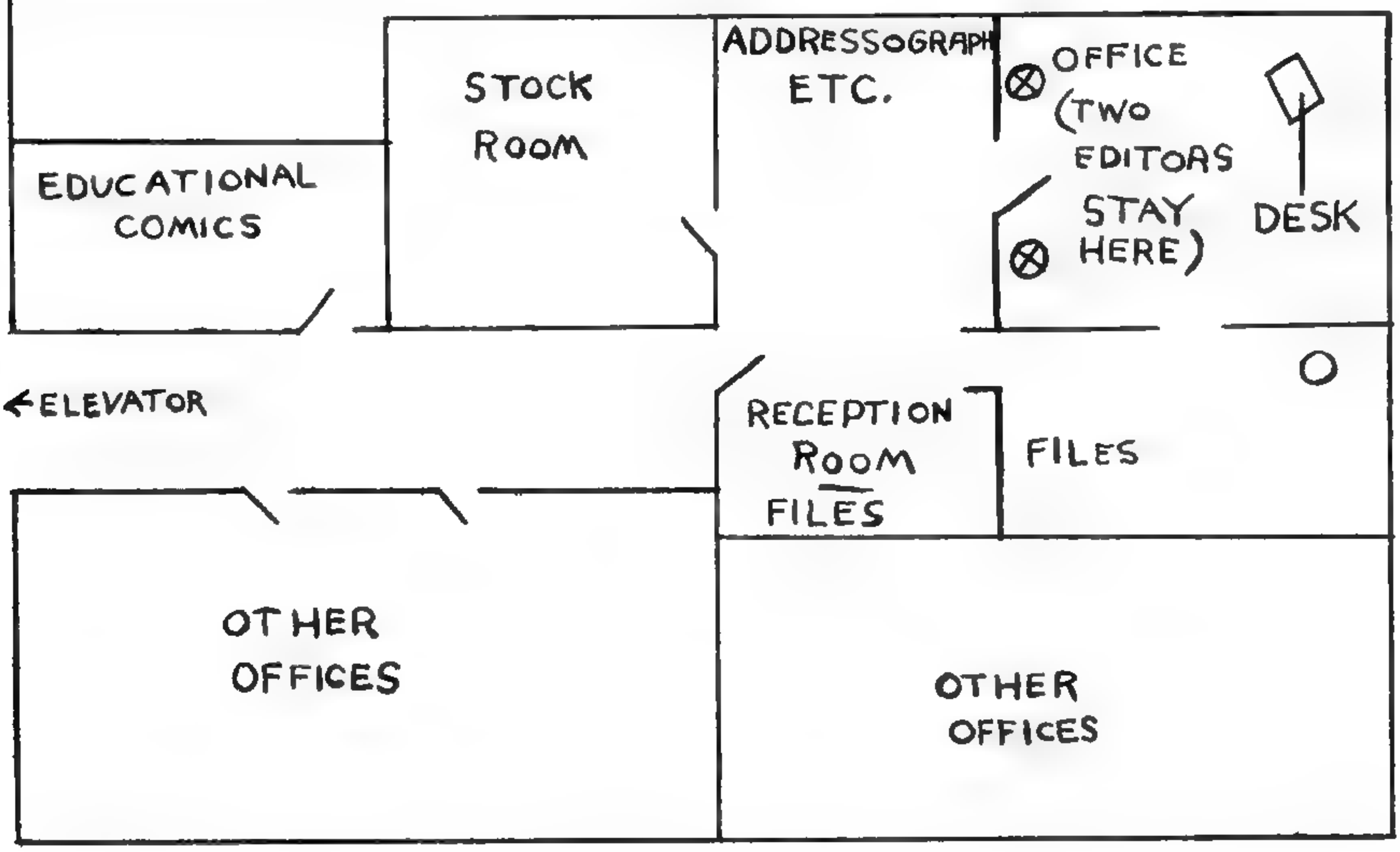


DIAGRAM BY BILL GAINES



Floorplans of the EC offices appeared in various EC fanzines. Top left from **Hoohah** #2 (Dec. 1955-Jan. 1956), edited by Ron Parker. Top right: sketch by George Snowden III that appeared with his article in **The EC Fan Bulletin** #1, described in the accompanying text. Below: diagram by Bill Meyers which ran with "A Visit to EC" by Stan Grossman in **Potrzebie** #4 (1955).



⊗ COMPLETE FILES OF ALL E.C.s EVER PUBLISHED
○ WHERE I FOUND JOHNNY CRAIG, JUST STARTING THE FIRST "EXTRA"

The bacover, a portrait of the Old Witch in the style of Ingels by Nigel Kadell, is also in three colors, the same red, blue and purple that Spicer had used. (Bhob had originally contemplated using this as a front cover, and probably put it on the back because Kadell had left no room for a title logo.) In further contrast to the all purple first issue, there are also two interior pages with a second color.

Also adding to the polished look—by contrast!—is a two page mimeographed flyer which another fan had sent Bhob and asked him to include. It advertised the first issue of a fanzine, **Thurban**, and was the obvious forerunner of the crudzine ads that clutter today's comic adzines. Sample hype: "We will have a different cover each time. We may get a pro to do something for us later on." Sadly, **Thurban** was actually published, and so poorly that it became the butt of many jokes.

It might be well to comment here that the **Bulletin** was written in a generally literate manner; the grammar, sentence structure and spelling were all correct. One would expect and leave unmentioned such minimal achievements except for the fact that some rather elaborately produced fanzines of today completely fail in this category.

The rest of the issue contains: a page of news notes giving more data on the 3-D books and the merging of **Weird Science** and **Weird Fantasy**; a 3½ page **Vault of Horror** checklist similar to the later von Bernewitz **EC Checklist** but more detailed; and another questionnaire. The contents page has free listings of ECs for sale or trade, and a "Report from the Manchester, New Hampshire **Mad**men Club" by the president, Don Cantin, reprinted here in its entirety:

The only member reports that a one man convention was held last Saturday (and every Saturday) which consisted of a two hour search for MAD to complete my files. There was an auction later; I bought a Coke. End of Report.

Bhob also announced the results of the questionnaire in the first issue. Although the response was small, the results seemed to typify the then prevailing opinions. Davis, for example, was much more popular than Ingels. And one can see here how fantastically popular **Mad**, then in its seventh issue, was (particularly keeping in mind that Bhob obtained his readership through the pages of the science fiction books). Responses to polls, even statistically insignificant ones, are always fascinating, so it is being reprinted here in detail.

About 15 people returned last issue's question sheet. Therefore these voting results are probably very inaccurate. Maybe if EC would conduct such a survey themselves, an accurate polling could be produced. (I can just see the Old Witch compiling a Table of Sadistics.) Here are the results, for what they may be worth:

Evans received one vote for worst artist and one for best. Davis got 3B and no worst. Feldstein: 2 best. Williamson: 3B. Severin and Elder: 1B. Kurtzman: 1B and 1W. Wood: 2B. Ingels: 1B and 1W. Craig: 2B. Elder: 1W. Kubert: 1W. Kamen: 3W.

The results show that one EC mag is definitely liked above the others. FC: 3W and 2B. TFT: 1W and 3B. HoF: 2W and 3B. CSS: 1W and 2B. SSS: 2B. TftC: 3B. WF: 4B. WS: 5B. And MAD got a total of 9 best votes.

For favorite writer: Craig got 2; Kurtzman, 2; Bradbury, 4; and Feldstein, 7. For worst writer, Bradbury got one and Dee [DeFuccio] got 2.

By totaling up the ages I found that the average EC fan is a boy 15 years old (my apologies to my 14 year old girl subscriber, Peggy Elder). A surprising number of EC fans are 17 years old or older.

There never was a third issue of **The EC Fan Bulletin.** Bhob was becoming increasingly unhappy with the hectograph process, which had a way of making carefully produced masters look sloppy, or worse, illegible, on reproduction. After the second issue, Bhob finished up **Fansciful**, and after that devoted his fannish activity to contributing to or co-editing publications that were mimeographed.

It's hard to believe that **The EC Fan Bulletin** was published over twenty years ago. It represents a time when $10 was an average investment for an amateur publication, and when fans may have had more trouble raising that $10 than today's fan has in raising $1,000. Fan publishing was an avocation; certainly not a profitable enterprise. The **Bulletin** was informal and unpretentious; a newsletter that didn't consider itself the beginning of a new fandom, rather, an off-shoot of "fandom." And at that it was a pretty good first effort for the period.

* * * * *

Very soon after **The EC Fan Bulletin** was published, a number of other EC fanzines appeared on the scene. In fact, the explosion was startling to Bhob, who had thought of his publication as a very specialized corner of fandom.

One of Bhob's subscribers was a Chicago fan name Ernie Crites. Crites wrote Bhob some strange letters in which he suggested that he could do a much better job on the **Bulletin** than Bhob, and finally asked Bhob to take a poll of his readers to determine who should be the editor of the **Bulletin**, Bhob or Crites!

A short time later Ernie Crites teamed up with another fan named Jim McCauley to publish **The EC Slime Sheet.** The few who have seen it have dubbed it a minor effort. According to Ron Parker, it ran three issues.

In the letter pages of **Mad** #6 (August-September 1953, just one month after Bhob's plug in **Weird Science**), Pat Armstrong of Alexandria, Louisiana announced his plans for a national Mad Melvin Club, and asked all interested fans to contact him. Another plug for the Club appeared in **Mad** #9. Armstrong was an **EC Fan Bulletin** subscriber and an occasional correspondent

This is the author as he looked in 1958. He has been reading EC's off and on ever since he saw a copy of **Mad** #1 in 1952. He was an occasional contributor to such early EC fanzines as **Hoohah** and **Concept**, both of which will be covered in detail (including reprinted material) in a future part of this article. In the late fifties he published his own fanzine, Image, which will be briefly mentioned when the other fanzines of that period, such as **Spoof, Foo.Fanfare,** Mike Britt's **Squatront,** and the "satire" fanzines, are covered.

He's still looking for copies, Xerox or otherwise, of **Potrzebie** #1, the early **EC Fan Journal**'s, and a few other publications of the period in order to complete his research for this series.

MAD MELVIN

The Newsletter

10¢

VOL. II NO. 1 — Alexandria, Louisiana, September, 1955 — whole no. 3

MELVINS INVOLVED IN MURDER

LOCAL CLUBS—HOW AND WHY

One cold, bleak, rainy day you're not going to get your copy of MMN in the mail. You'll probably wonder why, too, but only for a brief moment. You'll soon realize why. . . or, if you don't within a week you'll get a letter and a money order refunding the un-used portion of the money you sent in to us. But you may still wonder why.

In unity there is strength, and a MAD fan in the club is worth 10,000 in the newstand. When this club first started over two years ago, there were 250 members—in a club that didn't do anything but sit on its twat and read funny books.

We fully realize that we are responsible for that, for we were the only ones in a position to do anything. And we waited so long to do it that many of the members had quit by the time the first MMN had got to them.

● THE SINKING OF THE SHIP

So the club is now on the rocks, and there's no lighthouse in sight. We need money so we can give you members out there something for what you give us.

Now don't get us wrong. Money isn't our prime goal. We're just in this deal to have a heluva good time reading MAD, Pogo, COCKEYED, Thurber, and Marquis.

And we'd like to see you having as good a time. , And you could, too. You could send in your stories for publication and organize local clubs.

With our small membership at present we can't do anything. Our original 250 has dwindled down to barely 20. We have no regular dues, but that is more a result that a cause of our plight. With more members we could stabilize a due rate and thereby have a standing sum in the club treasury for publication of this rag. With such a rate MMN would no doubt be much larger than thus.

● THE MATTER OF DUES

Dues could either be paid member by member or by club charter, or both. That is, we could have it so that each member pays a set sum per year for which he is to receive the club paper, a membership card, membership in a local club in any city in which he may reside. And he would then have to pay dues to the local organization, too, if the local boys decided that would be the best. The national dues, would, therefore, be very low.

Or else the local club would pay aggrigate dues to the national organization and members would receive their mags in a Confederate sort of way--the entire group would be sent to the local president and distributed at the local meeting.

● A STRONG FEDERAL UNION

Local clubs would strengthen the national organization. It would do this in several ways.

First, as we have previously noted, it would produce a better magazine, with more material, better printing, and a regular price schedule.

Next, it would give MAD fans a higher place in the annals of society. How many times have you entered a conversation of persons talking about MAD and proudly pulled out your card. It is, you'll admit, a great feeling. They don't think you're so crazy. They think you're serious minded, even about humor. They think you're more intelligent than they did when you first told them that you read MAD.

For many are they who think that MAD readers are a wee bit off, a bit "queer." This membership in a strong national organization will change their views toward you.

Last, we want to have fun. This needs no explanation. That's what we're all in here for. We just want to have a good time and read some good books. And we will, too. . . if we have our local clubs.

But to start these clubs, you must have MAD fans. There are millions of them, but they're not too easy to find. Most of them kinda keep to themselves their loving for lampoons. They do that for reasons mentioned in the above paragraphs: people may think they're crazy. But pretty soon they'll show their hands and reveal their MAD desires.

● WHERE TO LOOK

So watch for them. Watch the fellows around the neighborhood. One of them might be a fan. Look at school this fall, especially you collegians-- MAD appeals more to the college crowd anyway. Look at college field houses and you'll usually see a stack of MADS six feet high (at Louisiana State University there was a stack four feet high).

Look at church. You'll find one or two there, expecially at youth meetings. Watch your civic organizations. Members of your junior baseball leauges or your American Legion teams might be lampoonists. The clubs you may belong to, Delay, Rainbow, CYO, Scouts, YMCA, YWCA, all are hunting grounds for MAD members.

Alexandria runs a gymnasium throughout the summer. If your city does the same, look for your MAD fans there. . . There is no limit to the possibilities.

BUT: Be careful only to get true MAD fans, for the sake of maintaining the club and keeping yourself from looking like an idiot. Don't run into it too fast and make a fool of yourself.

● THEN, THE JUBILEE

And after your club is formed, your members gotten, what? Get someone to throw a coke party. Come over and talk MAD, Pogo. Compare notes, trade zines. Live it up. If your membership grows, you may even have large parties! Who knows, someday in the far distant future you may have a big dance and even a national convention!!!!!!

Elect you some officers. Get a president, secretary, a treasurer, if you collect dues. Write in and tell us what the local guys and gals have done. We'll print every bit of news we get. Organize material. Send in stories. Join the gang.

So, you see, it's all in the hands of you out there. It rests solely upon your shoulders whether this club is a success or not. It will rise and fall with you. Come one. . . get on the ball. Let's get this show on the road.

SCRIBBLINGS TIE SUSPECT TO MAD MELVIN CLUB

REPORTER QUERIES ARMSTRONG

The Mad Melvens of America were involved in the Judy Ann Roberts murder case in Miami July 11. A reporter from the Miami Herald called president of the club Pat Armstrong for the first implication.

The call was for clarification of odd scribblings in the diary of a murder suspect, Robert Brown. Brown's diary showed that anyone interested in joining the Mad Melvin Club should write Alexandria for a membership card.

Pat Armstrong—what, me worry?

The suspect, Robert Brown, had changed his name from Raphael Machalica. A search of club file found no refenence to either name.

The reporter from the Herald talked to Armstrong some seven minutes but never gave him the opportunity to find out anything about the questions. The reporter, calling Alexandria via long distance tele[illegible] would not tell Armstrong anything about the case.

Club headquarters was completely in the dark about the matter (see story to left) until a new member who had been vacationing in Miami heard about it and sent in the clippings.

CALL LEAVES PRESIDENT WONDERING

by Pat Armstrong

On July 11, I got a puzzling long distance telephone call from a reporter on the Miami Herald. Our conversation went something like this:

"Hello, this is such-and-such (forgot his name) of the Miami Herald. May I speak to Pat Armstrong?"

"Speaking."

"Mr. Armstrong, do you mind I if ask you a few questions concerning the Melvin Club?"

"You mean the Mad Melvin Club, don't you?"

"Ahhh, yes. You are an official of this Mad Melvin Club, are you not?"

"Yes, I am president of the organization."

"Just exactly what is the Mad Melvin Club, Mr. Armstrong?"

I was growing rather annoyed with this Mr. Armstrong routone. After all I'm only 16. "That's kind of a hard question to answer." (I don't know why I said that. There's nothing to answering it.) "The club's been organized about three years now. It's a fan club for the comicbook MAD."

"I see. What did you do in the, er, club?"

"Well, we exchange names and addresses with members of the club and discuss the comic book MAD. The book has since changed to a slick publication and is no longer considered a comic book. We publish a fanzine (that's an amateur publication) and send it to the club members."

"How many members are there?"

"About 260 members from 40 states, Hawaii, Canada, and England."

As I answered the questions I could hear him typing the answers in the background. "Could you possibly tell me if there is a Robert Brown or a Raphael Machalica in your organization?"

I checked with the list of members I keep and replied, "I'm sorry, but I can't seem to find those names listed."

"Thank you," he replied, and before I could ask a few questions of my own, he had hung up.

During the next few weeks, Clyde, Henry, and I would meet at Henry's house and spend the greater part of the afternoon sitting on his front porch trying to figure out the reason for the call. At long last, we decided to forget it all--for a while, at least.

About three weeks later, I got a letter with a Miami postmark from Ted Sturm of Greensboro, N. C. The first paragraph of the letter read:

> I am on vacation in Miami. I read an article in the paper about the Judy Ann Roberts murder case. It interested me to the point of writing this letter.

He went on the request membership in the club, as he was a fan of MAD and Panic.

This confused us even more. I hurriedly wrote him asking for the complete details of this murder case and, if possible, the article from the Herald. Then we spent a few more afternoons on Henrys porch wondering what the Mad Melvin Club could have to do with a murder.

Ted soon sent us an article from the Miami Herald which told of the scribblings in the diary of a murder suspect on how to join the Mad Melvin Club. This didn't really clear things up. . . . We still wonder why this suspect thought to write of the Mad Melvin Club in his diary. Perhaps he planned to join. Perhaps he had nothing better to do. Perhaps. . . .

Editorial . . . . . .

In a recent letter, a member of the club asked. . . or rather demanded more activities. This isn't the first time in our club's brief history that members have asked for more activities. But it was the first time that they had asked for them in such a manner. It was more or less an order for us to get on the ball and start giving members something for their money.

This order prompted a search into club treasury records and brought out the interesting fact that this member had given next to no money at all to get something for. And the day was dark and dreary. . . .

We hope that all of the club's members are not like this. Well, we know that most of them aren't. But still the membership of this organization is exceedingly pathetic. The hypocrites rant and rave and scream and shout for something to be done, for us to give them more activities; but they make no suggestions as to what activities, and no effort to help us give the the activities that they are already getting.

The club is on the ropes with its guard down and the opponent is pouring it on. We are just in on a game heart, condition, a love for satire, and a pure mule-headed stubbornness. The club is gravely in need of reinforcements and ammunitions to fight the diabolical enemy, debt, which is slowly subdueing the most loyal order of Mad Melvins. Inplain, un-fancied, good ole American, we need new members with new money to boost the club's dwendling roster and treasury. So, Melvins, it all doesn't depend on your poor old club officers A lot depends upons you, the members. Perhaps you wonder exactly what poor little old you can do. Well, you can do your best to get your friends interested in satire in any form, especially MAD. Inform the un-educated masses about MAD and the like and defend satire from every root and stump you can find.

It always helps to renew your subscription. Send in your letters to the main office with hints (if we only got one that would work) criticisms (oh, do we ever get that by the car-load--but make them constructive) and subscriptions (oh, if you only would). Then, that would bring about a club you could be proud of. Just follow the instructions in the article on local clubs and we shall succeed.

Mad Melvin
The Newsletter
is published monthly by the Mad Melvins of America at
2317 Myrtle Street
Alexandria, Louisiana
Official journal, Mad Melvin Club. Single copy, 10¢. twelve for $1.00. Make money orders payable to Clyde Waddell.

of Bhob's. Eventually, Armstrong published a Club newsletter. The third issue, which is reproduced here in its entirety (and same size), was probably the last. Very likely it was the first offset comic fanzine. Several years later, Armstrong wrote an amusing and fannish account of the Club and its Big Moment (the Judy Ann Roberts murder case) entitled "The Mad Melvin Club Caper," which appeared in **Hoohah** #7 (October 1957).

Another little known fanzine of the period whose existence has recently come to light is **Graham Backers**, published by Mike Becker of Oakland, California. As the name suggests, **Backers** consisted primarily of news, reviews and comment about the work of EC artist Graham Ingels, although it also covered other EC data, had a letters column, etc. It started around December of 1953, at first being distributed only to local fans, but then working up to a fair circulation by sending sample copies to fans listed in the **Fan-Addict Club Bulletin**. It was mimeographed and ran several issues, about six to ten pages each.

EC Scoop, published by Barry Cronin of New York City, was another short lived newssheet of the period.

Another early dittoed or hectoed fanzine was **The EC S-F Mags Fanzine**, published by Randy Brown of Dallas, Texas. The first (and probably only) issue is undated, but seems to have come out in mid-1954. Its 12 pages contain fiction, atrocious art, short reviews (including a fanzine review of **Thurban**), future plans, letters, and a floorplan of the EC offices (unembellished by text and apparently cribbed from **The EC Fan Bulletin**)—a weak issue. One of the letters shows how the political preoccupations of that decade even permeated the discussions of comic fans:

I had one boy get mad because I would not sell him 35 books at 25¢ apiece. When I told him I wanted to sell them to people who needed them, he accused me of being a communist and everything else. He did not realize he was the one acting like a communist. This is a free country and I did not have to sell them to him in the first place.

Of course, EC's own **The National EC Fan-Addict Club Bulletin** was in its own right a fanzine of the period. Whether or not Bhob's publication influenced EC to start up the Fan-Addict Club is an open question. The announcement of the Club, appearing in the October 1953 EC comics letter pages and mentioning a possible bulletin for which members would have to pay a subscription fee, must have been prepared just about when the first **EC Fan Bulletin** came out. Perhaps after seeing his effort they felt they could do the job better. At any rate, before their first issue appeared, but after Bhob's first issue appeared, Bill Gaines sent Bhob a postcard scribbled in pencil asking him to become a contributing editor to their **Bulletin**. Bhob immediately sent off a long article, but it was never used, and Bhob never heard anything more about the subject.

Today, Bill Gaines has no recollection of sending that postcard. He doesn't recall being influenced by Bhob's **Bulletin**, but then he freely admits to a failing memory about such matters.

The **Fan-Addict Bulletin** ran five issues, from November 1953 to December 1954, and the run has been reprinted in its entirety in **Squa Tront** #4, as well as being reproduced in an authorized facsimile edition (for those who want to know what color the paper was) by Dave Gibson a few years back. Members never did have to pay a subscription fee, but in June 1954 the membership fee was raised from 25¢ to 50¢ to help defray the **Bulletin** costs. Since the membership kits cost EC slightly more than a quarter to produce and most members had joined before the rate went up, the cost of the **Bulletin** was actually bourne almost entirely by EC, which is one reason why it's a true **fan**zine.

Rumors that the **Fan-Addict Bulletin** was discontinued because the Club membership had swelled to unexpected size are not true. EC's first and only edition of the membership kit was 25,000. By the end, the membership roster was about 23,500, showing that Gaines and his staff had made a pretty exact advance estimate of the potential size of the club.

For Bill Gaines, the whole club and **Bulletin** was done just for kicks. "It never really accomplished anything that amounted to much," he says.

Two other fanzines which began during this early period, **Potrzebie** and **The EC Fan Journal**, will be covered in detail in the next instalment of this article. —John Benson

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(3-D continued from page 25)

moves the celluoid sheets to the right, each piece progressively a little more than the last, and photographs it a second time. One photo is printed in red, the other in blue-green.

This is why the panel borders are so far apart in a 3-D comic. The blank space between the panels (which must be opaqued on the zero, or page level, sheet) covers up the edges of the drawings when they are moved to the right.

Except for a possible first flush of excitement based on the challenge of the thing, most artists hated to do 3-D comics because of the difficulty and extra work, specifically:

1) It's harder to ink celluloid than paper.

2) After inking, one has to opaque each figure on the other side.

3) The 3-D process tolerated a more filled-up cluttered panel. In fact, it demanded it, if it was going to be exciting 3-D. Close-up and filler panels were generally not desired. When stories intended for 3-D are published flat (as in **Squa Tront** and **Witzend**) this cluttered effect is quite apparent.

4) Every panel had maybe half again as much drawing as was seen in final publication hidden under the cels. Although it was possible for the artist to figure out approximately how the cels would be moved during the photographic process, it was so difficult that he usually wound up drawing whole figures and objects because he didn't know which part would be covered up by the layer above.

5) One had to figure out the perspective very carefully, or the picture could look ridiculous, with figures hanging in the air instead of standing on the ground, and so forth.

—John Benson

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR NOTE! IT'LL HELP US IN CHOOSING THE KIND OF STORIES YOU WANT US TO PUBLISH!
HI! I GOT SOME REAL FIRST-HAND MATERIAL FOR MY NEXT JOB!
JOE ORLANDO
DICK SMITH
GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS
HELLO! HELLO!
WHAT'S THAT, LITTLE BOY? YOU DON'T HAVE A DOLLAR. CAN YOU MAIL IN YOUR... MOTHER?
NANCY SIEGEL
GLORIA ORLANDO
Ingels
JOE! YOU SAID YOU WERE GOING TO CAPE COD!
B. Krigstein
HEY, JOE! HOW ARE THE BOOKS GOING ON MARS?
BOB SALOMON
WM. M. GAINES
LOOK, SEVERIN, I'LL TRADE YOU A NIEUPORT FOR TWO DRAGOONS!
EVANS
BILL ELDER
HARVEY KURTZ
Hi, Lo
JACK KAMEN
FELDSTEIN
EDITOR WRITER ARTIST MONEY COUNTER HUMORIST
NOW I WANT A GOOD, CLEAN JOB!
LYLE STUART
WHITE WASH
HIMSELF
I'M ON A PRIVATEER!
I'M DOING A PRIVATE-EYE STORY!
JOHNNY CRAIG
REED CRANDALL
MARIE SEVERIN
J.P. SEVERIN
SAY, FELLAS, CAN I WATCH?
O.K. AL, I'LL HELP YOU WITH MONSTERS AND YOU CAN HELP ME RESCUE DAMSELS!
AL WILLIAMSON
WOOD

DRAWED BY LIL' M SEVERIN

IN THIS ISSUE

Checking through the 272 pages of the first four issues of **Squa Tront**, I was amazed to find not one significant mention of **Mad** comics. Harvey Kurtzman's original sketches for other projects, which ran in the fourth issue, were the only items that were even distantly related. Yet, as a 1953 poll that is reprinted elsewhere this issue indicates, **Mad** was far and away the most popular EC comic, almost from its first issue. The **Mad** comics received their full share of coverage in the EC fanzines of the period, but for some reason they have been neglected in the current fanzines.

We intend to change that trend, and have started in this issue by reprinting a spread by Bill Elder of all the old **Mad** characters. In future issues, there'll be more on **Mad**, and more on Bill Elder, one of EC's great artists, who came into his own in **Mad.**

It was Harvey Kurtzman's **Mad** that liberated a generation from the baser aspects of the mass culture dominated society of the Fifties by examining that culture through the magnifying glass of parody and satire. Many of the underground comic book artists were part of that generation, and many publicly express their debt to Kurtzman.

Recently a group of underground artists produced, under the editorship of Jay Lynch, a hilarious and loving recreation of the old **Mad** comics in the form of **Tales Calculated to Sell You Bijou** #8, a full color underground comic in which they use the Kurtzman format to parody each other's creations. In a way, the book is both a parody of the **Mad** comics and a parody of the underground comics characters. For example, Stout starts his "Snazzy Melvin Snoot" (a parody of Skip Williamson's "Snappy Sammy Smoot") with exactly the same situation and page layout as Kurtzman's "Little Orphan Melvin" in **Mad #9.** The bacover of **Bijou**, by Ralph Reese, borrows its format from the opening page of Kurtzman's "Julius Caesar" in **Mad #17.** And Harvey Kurtzman himself does a brilliant cover for **Bijou #8**, as much a comment on the Seventies as the cover of **Mad #4**, on which it is based, spoke to readers in the Fifties.

It could have been a confusing failure, but it all works fantastically, and is absolutely the funniest stuff to appear since its inspiration disappeared from the newsstands twenty years ago.

Many people have tried to imitate the Kurtzman brand of humor, and the result has usually been a dismal flop. These dozen cartoonists are the first who have really understood the techniques of Kurtzman's total parody assault on both the style and content of the material parodied. Parody of a drawing style is particularly difficult to pull off; too often the parody seems a mere imitation. But Robert Crumb's parody of Jay Lynch's overworked backgrounds, and Bill Griffith's careful recreation of Kim Deitch's long armed characters inhabiting panels that proliferate within panels are enormously funny.

The only qualification that must be made about **Bijou #8** is that the mighty labor that went into it will only be truly appreciated by a very small audience; those who are both familiar with underground comics and Kurtzman's **Mad.**

Bijou #8 is available for 90 ¢ from The Cartoonists Co-Op Press, P.O. Box 40474, San Francisco, California 94110 (you must be over 18, state age) or from your favorite underground comics distributor.

* * * * * *

Some of you may feel that this whole issue of **Squa Tront** is a little heavy on nostalgia and light on the serious constructive stuff that the editor has been known to do in the past. No apology is made for that. This issue has been enormous fun to produce, and the pleasure gained from its production is the only excuse for its existence.

Possibly the most ingrown article of all is Part I of The History of EC Fanzines, and naturally this was the most pleasure of all to write. Just who will want to read it, we're not sure, but those who do should find the series exhaustive by the time it's finished. Actually, science fiction fandom's history has been chronicled in

full length books—Harry Warner's **All Our Yesterdays** and Sam Moskowitz's **The Immortal Storm**—but this is the first extensive review of comic fandom we know of.

We'd like to remind readers that the old EC fanzines were produced purely for the love of it and were either given away or sold for the cost of postage and paper. If this article results in the putting of a collector's "price" on these old fanzines, then the author has committed a grievous sin. Lend them, trade them, give out xerox copies, or wait until **Squa Tront** reprints the worthwhile material from them, but don't offer them for sale, or put a price on their heads as though they were wanted criminals. If you do, the great ghod Ghu, a powerful fannish diety of the Fifties, will mildew your EC's and give you the cramps.

The GhouLunatic photo piece is another piece of blatant memorabiliasm (but so is the title "Qua Brot," for that matter). In last issue's reprint of John Severin's "Thank you for your note" EC staff panorama, there's a young man in the exact center carrying a bushel of money. This is Paul Kast, and the bushel is undoubtedly the one he made selling GhouLunatic photos. He has kindly retold the whole story for us, although he did get a few of his facts wrong. The mailing address for the photos was the **EC offices**, not his home. Bill Gaines recalls that Kast's sister Ruby would carry the orders home each day, and the photos would be **mailed out** from Merrick.

COMING IN FUTURE ISSUES

Our next issue will feature a 20 page interview with Bernard Krigstein, recorded in 1962 and newly updated, with complete accompanying illustrations. The original 200 copy print run of this extraordinary conversation has long been out of print, and it much deserves the wider distribution that **Squa Tront** will give it.

Accompanying the interview will be a detailed and very perceptive analysis of Krigstein's famous story "The Master Race," written by Art Spiegelman. Spiegelman is an underground cartoonist whose best work is fully as extraordinary and ground breaking today as Krigstein's work was twenty years ago. His four page story about his mother's suicide, "Prisoner on the Hell Planet," is a powerful work, the finest thing to appear in comic form in many years. "Prisoner" is hidden in the back of **Short Order Comix**, which is available for 65 ¢ from Cartoonists Co-Op Press (see address above) or your favorite underground comics dealer.

* * * * * *

A lot of other material is lined up for future issues, much of it already on hand: a portfolio of Al Williamson sketches, including preliminary roughs for several EC stories; fascinating cover roughs and ideas that Roy Krenkel once did for **Creepy** and **Eerie**; a photo article of the EC offices in 1954 by Larry Ivie; more rare Kurtzman material; an essay on Severin and Elder's "American Eagle" series for **Prize Comics Western**; a special checklist of **Mad** comics reprints compiled by Fred von Bernewitz; coverage of the animated films of Jack Davis; a feature on the EC-like Harvey horror comics of the Fifties, and, of course, more history and reprints from the original EC fanzines, and lots more rare art by all of the great EC artists. Eventually we'll be spreading out to cover other, non-EC related, comics material.

Future issues of **Squa Tront** will have a letters page, gang, so let us know what you liked and hated about this issue, and why. We're also interested in letters of general interest, discussing topics brought up in this issue, or relating to EC or comic art in general.

PLUGS

There are several plugs we'd like to make which we weren't able to sneak into the main body of the editorial. First, if you like **Squa Tront**, you may enjoy these other excellent quality fanzines:

Graphic Story Magazine #16 has a long interview with comic artist Howard Nostrand by Bhob Stewart (this ties in nicely with the upcoming **Squa Tront** Harvey horror comics article, Nostrand being one of their star artists. There are also comics by Woverton, Metzger, and more. Price: $1.50 per issue, or $5 for four issues. Order from Bill Spicer, 329 North Avenue 66, Los Angeles, California 90042.

Funnyworld is published by Mike Barrier, who in our opinion is the best of those who are currently writing about comics. In earlier issues, **Funnyworld** often focused attention on the masterful work of Carl Barks (creator of Uncle Scrooge), but it has recently devoted more space to coverage of animated cartoons. Barrier does intend to continue coverage of comics, however, and the extraordinary high literate standard of his publication makes it a must. The latest issue, #15, contains the second part of Barrier's thorough and fascinating "Filming of Fritz the Cat," and a part of his continuing detailed Barks bibliography. Copies are still available at $1.25 from Mike Barrier, Box 28875, Atlanta, Georgia 30328. A four issue subscription is $5.00.

Wonderworld is another high quality publication about comics, published by Richard Kyle, P.O. Box 16168, Long Beach, California 90806. Write to him for details regarding rates and other comics related publications that he's planning.

The Creative Adventure covers the field of current newsstand comics and is worth your attention. The second issue features a lengthy interview with Dick Giordano which is a lot more interesting than you might expect. It's still available for $1.00 from David Kasakove, 83 Irma Avenue, Port Washington, N.Y. 11050.

Inside Comics has a new editor: Ron Barlow. This should mean a change from the first issue's unfortunate "expose" pose, with a trend toward solid reporting and in depth articles. The third issue features: "The Comics Code: 20 Years of Self-Strangulation?" The big names in the comic industry reveal their inner feelings about the CODE. At $1 per issue,

you can't miss. Order from Inside Comics, 11 West 17th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Our staff and associates have been busy on other projects besides **Squa Tront** which may interest our readers.

Bill Peckmann, who was instrumental in providing the Kurtzman material this issue, has published a 16"x20" print by Kurtzman, a panoramic view of a pinball haven. The prints are individually numbered and signed, and the three color printing (in sepia tones) was supervised by the artist. We highly recommend this item, sent first class in a sturdy mailing tube for $5.00, from Bill Peckmann, Room 403, 65 East 55th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022.

Bill Pearson, editor of the now inactive **Witzend**, has recently brought out **Grave Tales**, a beautifully produced 8½"x11" book

of three comic stories illustrated by Don Newton, Robert Parsons, and Mike Roberts. This limited numbered edition, printed on heavy stock is available for $1.95 from Wonderful Publishing Co., Box 15755, Arcadia Station, Phoenix, Arizona 85060. Back issues of **Witzend** are still available from the same address; issues 6, 7 and 8 at $1.50, and the ninth issue, a special all W.C. Fields photo issue (including a glossy color print of Fields rendered by Jeff Jones), at $3.00.

And speaking of back issues, all issues of **Squa Tront** are in print at this time. For back issues, make your checks out to **Jerry Weist** (important!) and mail your order to: John Benson, 207 West 80th Street, #2B, New York, N.Y. 10024. The contents and price for each issue follows:

Squa Tront #1. Flash Gordon by Williamson and Crandall; Graham Ingels history and samples of his early work; EC horror annual covers; etc. $3.00.

Squa Tront #2. Covers by Williamson and Crandall; EC war comics article with Kurtzman sketch; Williamson portfolio; "Tiga" dailies by Frazetta; Wrightson art; **Weird Science** and **Weird Fantasy** covers; etc. $3.00.

Squa Tront #3. Full color process covers by Feldstein and Crandall; art by Krenkel, Metzger, Wrightson, Kenneth Smith; EC sf article, with comments by Ray Bradbury, Gaines and Larry Stark; "Flash Gordon" dailies by Frazetta; "Days of Wine and Fleagles" by Nick Meglin; article on Crandall with sketches; Wertham article; "The Flying Swifts" strip by George Evans, etc. $3.00.

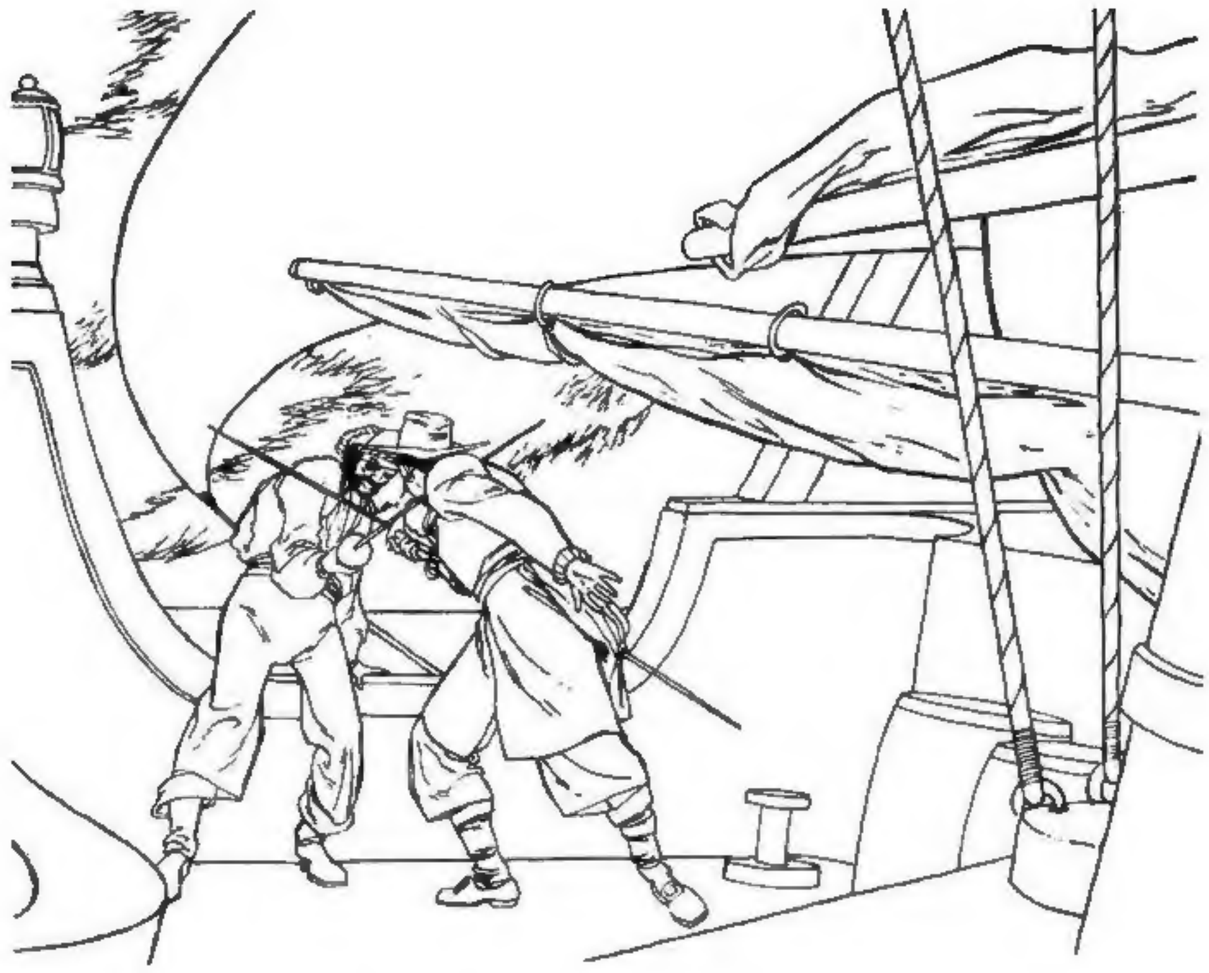
Squa Tront #4. Full color process covers by Ingels, Kurtzman, Kenneth Smith and Bodé; art by Krenkel, Williamson, Corben, etc.; 21 pages of Kurtzman, including article by De Fuccio; more "Wine and Fleagles"; two unpublished EC stories by Krigstein and Crandall; Craig interview; "Amazing Merwin" strip by Evans; Frazetta Collector; FanAddict Club Bulletins reprinted; etc. $5.00.

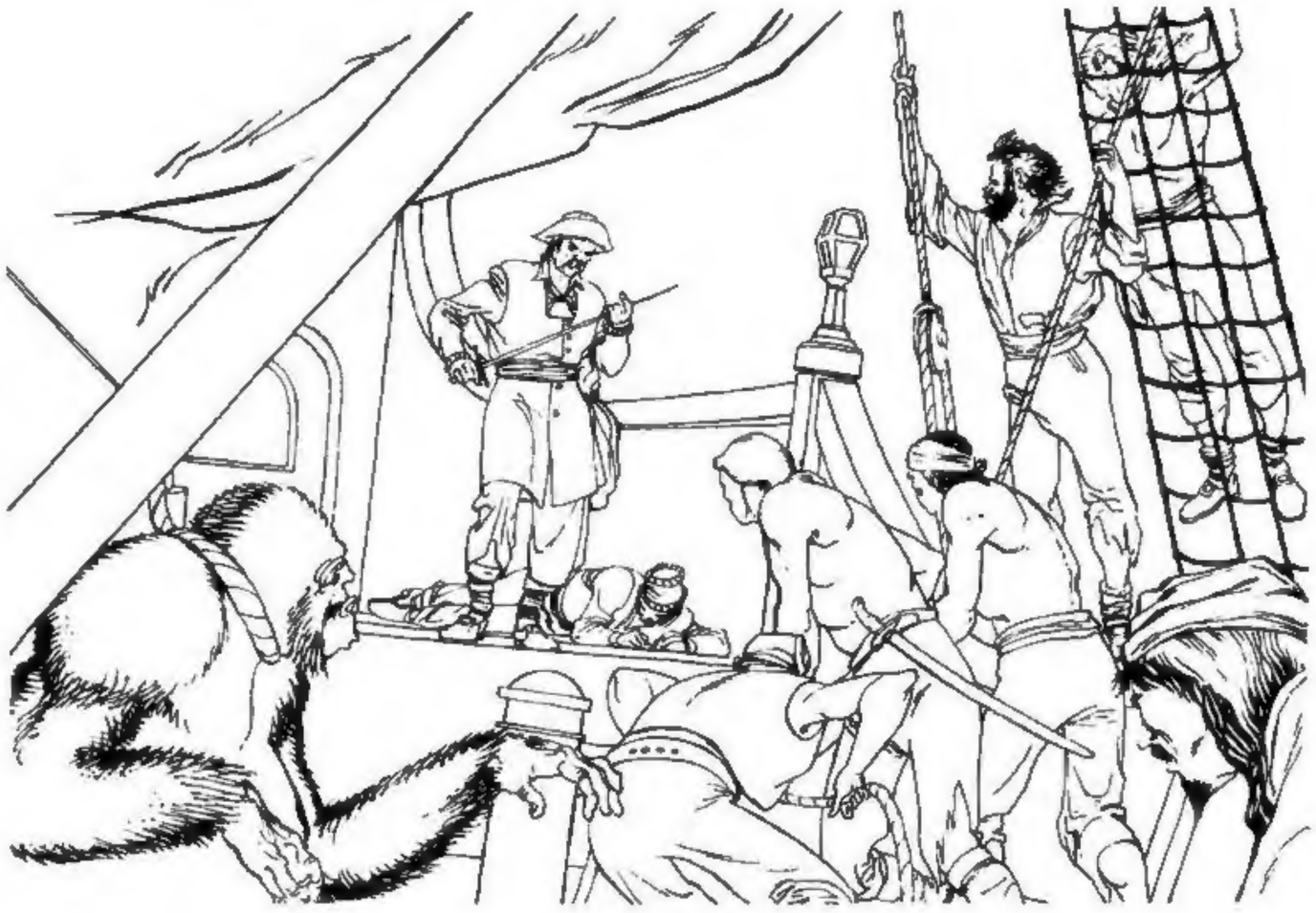
Lastly, we should mention that Bhob Stewart, whose first fanzine is given detailed coverage in this issue, has done an underground comic, **Tales from the Fridge** (with a nifty EC parody cover), which is available for 65¢ from Denis Kitchen, P.O. Box 7, Princeton, Wisconsin 54968 (adults only, state age).

—John Benson

Just as we go to press, we have learned that what is probably the greatest comic of all time, Lynd Ward's **Vertigo**, has been reprinted. **Vertigo** is the last, the most ambitious and the most successful of the 'wood-cut novels' that Ward did in the thirties. Its narrative is a deeply felt description of the effect of the Great Depression on the lives of three individuals, and the story is told with such power and purity of expression that Ward's images remain etched in one's brain years after the book is read. If ever the visual narrative achieved greatness, it is with this book.

Vertigo is now in print together with Ward's other 'wood-cut novels' (**God's Man, Madman's Drum, Wild Pilgrimage,** and the shorter **Prelude to a Million Years** and **Song Without Words**) in a single large volume entitled **Storyteller Without Words**. It's published by Harry N. Abrams at $35, and the book is worth every penny. We're sorry that there isn't enough space to cover Ward's work properly here. Perhaps we'll print a full review next issue.





JOHNNY CRAIG